



## CELEBRITY GAMERS

Henry Hill plays GTA; Eminem's new game; and Angelica Bridges interviewed! (Who? Who cares!)

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## HULK, T3, MATRIX...

Hollywood is getting involved with your videogames. Is this a good thing or a bad thing?



# ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

The #1 Videogame Magazine

Hot Stuff!

## TOP 20 GAMES OF THE SUMMER

Don't stay indoors without 'em!

Special Report

## PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 2, GAMECUBE 2...

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See pg. 10!



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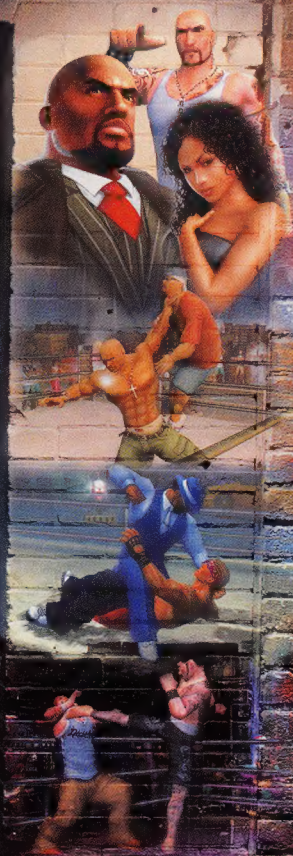
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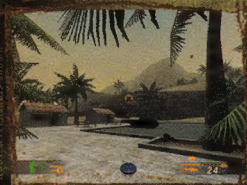




# DEEP IN CUBA, THE GHOSTS

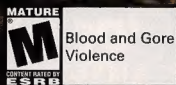


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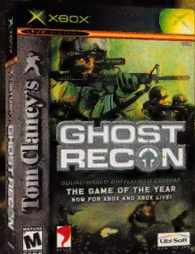
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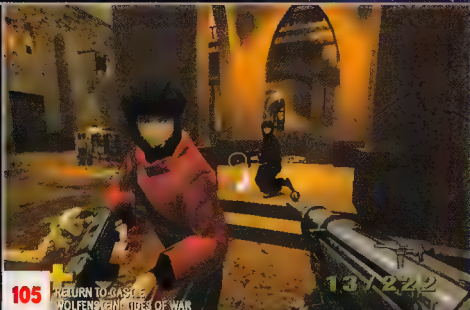


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COVER STORY:

# CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE

We're the first to open the casket on the next *Castlevania*—and guess what—it's not coming to the Game Boy Advance. Check out our exclusive hands-on report of *Lament of Innocence* for the PlayStation 2

## editorial



It's a monthly routine: I sit in front of my computer right on deadline, spending half the time wondering what the heck I should be writing for my editorial, spending the other half cursing whoever's responsible for making editorials a standard practice for magazines, cause I hate writing them.

Managing Editor Jennifer Tsao just tossed me this look that clearly told me I had better get this editorial done or else...so I better get back to work. "Well," I tell Jennifer, smiling, "I'm halfway done, and I haven't even said anything worth a damn yet!" Her stink eye doesn't lower its alert level, so back to scratching my head I go.

Maybe this is a good thing, having no bigger issues to discuss. No violence-in-gaming controversies (knock on wood), no goodbyes to any consoles heading to an early grave, no wars bringing undue attention to war games...no nothing. So this is what it's like to think about nothing but games, nothing but fun? I can use this space to nerd-out about how great *Soul Calibur II* is (are you playing the Import version like we are?), or how addicting *Phantasy Star Online* continues to be (on the Xbox, I'm only a level 33 Ranger right now...how about you?). Or, I can go on about what a sick run of *Castlevanias* we've gotten so far as the Game Boy Advance (three games, three gold awards and Game of the Month honors from our Review Crew)...and now we're getting a PS2 version at last! But alas, I'm out of space. With any luck, editorializing on the fun, simpler aspects of videogaming will become a new monthly routine.

—Dan "Shoe" Hsu, Editor-in-Chief







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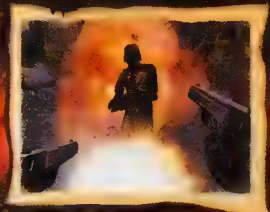
You are B.J. Blazkowicz, a US Army Ranger recruited by the OSA and the Allies' top specialist in covert operations, heavy weapons and assassination. Hitler's head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, is twisting science and the occult into an army capable of annihilating the Allies. The balance of victory is in your hands.

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Screenshots taken from Xbox 360 video game system and PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system gameplay.

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The main image is a promotional graphic for the video game Brute Force. It features four characters in a dark, industrial setting. On the left is a large, green, dinosaur-like creature with a skull mask and a mechanical arm. Next to it is a woman with short red hair in a tactical suit. Behind her is a man with a beard and a tactical vest. On the right is a woman with dark hair in a tactical suit, holding a large gun. The text "YOU ARE BRUTE FORCE" is overlaid in the center.

YOU ARE BRUTE FORCE

your knowledge of squad based combat will be severely tested. Depending on the danger at hand, you'll need to utilize the right Brute Force member for the job. Whether you play alone or in co-op mode, the battles escalate, the plot thickens and the violence gets addictive. It's an experience of such epic proportion that it could only exist on Xbox. Good luck. To all four of you.

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# Letters



Orta sans headgear is a bad scene.

## Letter of the month

### Cuff 'em and stuff 'em

I was interested to read Aaron Marshall's letter ("You Don't Look 21") in EGM #167. He seems to advocate penalties for retailers that sell M-rated games to minors. So, for example, a retailer would face a fine for selling a game like *BMX XXX*, which contains bare breasts and profanity...in other words, things you can find in R-rated movies. Therefore, it seems reasonable that retailers should face the same penalties for selling M-rated games to minors as they do for selling R-rated movies to minors.

Except there are no penalties for selling R-rated movies to minors! By advocating fines for selling M-rated games, Marshall is putting such games in the same category as pornography. Does he want the general public to view *GTA: Vice*

City as the same light as *Zone of the Enders*? Too bad, because they aren't.

Although actively restricting the availability of M-rated games to underage buyers would help shield the game industry from some of the more heinous *Rock II* reviews, you make a good point—one we expect will go ignored by lawmakers and the mainstream media, as they pass outraged judgement on games they've never played. How many years before a president runs on pro-gaming platform?



### Haberdashery hijinks

I recently rented *Panzer Dragoon* Orta for Xbox and thought it was pretty good, but I had a tiny problem—OK, a big problem—with the game. Where did my higrin' hat go? I know I had it on when I broke out of jail, but then I

### We said it

In EGM #161 (page 56) you made a joke about the Quidditch game being so improved in EA's *The Chamber of Secrets* game that we'd have EA Sports making a standalone Quidditch title in no time. How ironic/coincidental/possibly supernatural it is that EA has now announced *Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup* [Editor's Note: see

*Revolution* games? I can't anymore cuz I shattered a bone in my foot while trying to do a Swanton-like Jeff Hardy. I'm so PO'ed. The next two months will be torture.

—Traci R

We had a similar problem, but on account of a poorly executed triple lutz double-toe-loop salchow, death drop

**"Do you still play your *Dance Dance Revolution* games? I can't anymore cuz I shattered a bone in my foot."**

—Traci R

got on my dragon and poof, it was gone! Now my whole ensemble is thrown off.

—Jamie Curl

That just won't do. After you've played the game for 15 hours (or finish it on Hard), go to Box Game at Pandora's Box, select Costume, select Ending, and retrieve your precious headgear. Thought you could out-sausage *Tricks* Editor David Hodgson, eh? Better luck next time. Don't say we never did anything for ya.

page 38 for more info). May I request that you train me in the ways of your psychic powers so that I might use them for evil?

—Dylan Martin

Our oracular abilities are limited to forecasting events in the game industry, with occasional moments of prescience in the field of sports betting. Good luck taking over the world with that.

### DDR disability

Do you still play your *Dance Dance*

into cannonball. It was definitely worth it, though, no question.

## CONTACT EGM

Because we're dying to know what you're thinking, your favorite color, and what's up with this weather we're having, EGM@ziffdavis.com is your best bet, but this also works:

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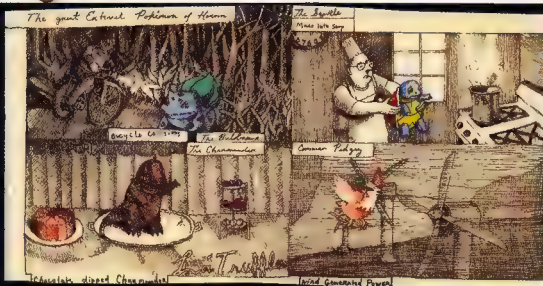
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## REPRINTS?

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## Tales of Pokedeath

Have you noticed some of the classic Pokémon you've (maybe) come to know and love have been replaced by slightly altered versions in *Ruby* and *Sapphire*? Vigilant reader Leo Hussey of Baltimore, MD, sure did. He's got some interesting theories on what went down—look for part two next month.



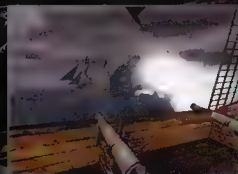


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## feedback

Last month marked the launch of our front-to-back redesign. We understand that change is frightening; despite some screaming and shouting, most of you handled it well and even had some excellent suggestions to further improve EGM's new look.

### PROS

Wow, that's all I can say. The redesign is great. I was speechless as I opened the new issue of EGM. I was skeptical when I first heard about the upcoming change, but the new layouts, colors, sections, more previews, and new music (at least I thought I heard music as I turned the first page) won me over. EGM is now second to none. My only little gripe is that someone spilled PC in my favorite magazine [Editor's Note: the PC Gaming Update column, see page 54]. Well, besides that one little problem, you are and will remain The #1 Videogame Magazine.

—Frank Reesp

I'm a longtime reader, and I must say the makeover is great. I think the best of the Previews and Reviews sections; just the way everything is laid out makes it more enjoyable to read—for some reason the screenshots seem to stand out more and I get a better feeling for the games covered. Also, it's about damn time you shrunk the sales charts. It was a huge waste of space for something I and probably many others, didn't think was that important.

Keep up the great work and don't be afraid of changing anything in the future as well.

—Philip de la Pena

Arrgh! Change! World spinning out of control! Panic engulfs me! Blackness everywhere! Panic...subsiding. Slight...returning. World...well, the world is still spinning, just not as bad. Redesign...still shockingly different, but not a bad thing. Good work, people.

—Kent Shambaugh

### CONS

Hmm. I like the new Press Start and Letters sections, but the Reviews and Previews (the reasons I buy EGM) should have been left alone. The new format lacks any semblance of organization—I loved how the games in the old EGM were color coded and divided into sections by system. Visually, the magazine is more exciting to look at but lacks the clarity of the old EGM. I hope you will take these points into consideration, as I think this redesign has great potential.

—Sven

I've been a reader for about 10 years, and I just want to say that while you guys are still doing a great job staying adult-oriented with no compromise, the new magazine layout really, truly stinks. I found it exceedingly hard on the eyes and confusing to read.

The most significant disappointment to me was the complete visual overhaul of the Review section. Please, please revert back to the old format of showing the score right on the actual review from each person. I love you guys; I just want my magazine to be readable, and I was highly disappointed last month. I'm usually eager to dig into the new issue, but I found myself putting it down out of exasperation.

—Kevin Vojdani



Shame on you all for the new art design. I have been a loyal subscriber for around six years now, and won't be renewing. I always admired EGM for being the smartest gaming magazine around. The new layout attempts to be dynamic and stylized, but just hits me with the same drone as so many who have pulled this crap before. I don't know where else to go for gaming news. EGM was the only publication left that didn't look and read like a dang circus. What's next? Cartoon characters for all the editors? I'd bitch about the articles, but this month's issue was too boring to get past the leads.

—Hines S. Grubb

Thanks to all our readers for the input, but extra thanks to Hines S. Grubb for his wonderful cartoon characters idea. Look forward to next month, when every editor will have a new, cuddly "fursanality!" Editor-in-Chief Dan "Shoe" Hsu has dubs on Angry Armadillo. The design will continue to evolve over the next few issues, so if you've got something to contribute, get on it.

## "In David Hasselhoff's levels, say, he could save drowning victims...and end up hugging his son and all that."

—Beau Wilson

### Public-service announcement

Here's some info for all those diabetic Game Boy Advance players out there. A new GBA is being developed that incorporates a blood-sugar monitor. Every reading in your set range will earn points, which you can redeem for special promos,

discounts, and games from Nintendo. Its called GlucoBoy—see [www.glucogames.com](http://www.glucogames.com) for more info. Prototypes have already proven successful in lowering blood sugar because, well, everyone wants free stuff

—Andrew Weber  
GlucoGames

### Cosplay kerner

Even though I am also a fan of Japanese bands, I was quite amused by Malia Jirra's letter (EGM #167) and your response to it. I actually have a photo of a Squall (Final Fantasy VIII) cosplayer with a bunch of Malice Mizer cosplayers from Otakon 2000. It's not exactly Cloud Strife (Final Fantasy VII) and Dir en Grey, but close enough. Enjoy!

—Chocomanji



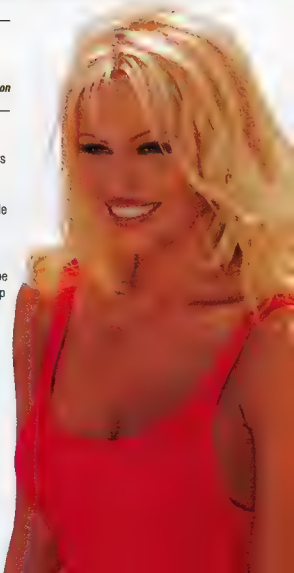
### Being David Hasselhoff

I was just watching Baywatch: a few hours ago, and I got a killer idea for a game: Baywatch: Picture It—you could play as David Hasselhoff, Pamela Anderson, Nicole Eggert, Yasmine Bleeth, Alexandra Paul, and whoever else starred in it.

In David Hasselhoff's levels, say, he could save drowning victims, try to escape a crazy woman he once loved, and end up hugging his son and all that, just like in the series! Pamela's levels could maybe be T&A or something, I don't know. You could drive around the city à la Grand Theft Auto, go to the beach and save swimmers, or build up passionate relationships with other people! Hell, this thing could even be online. I'm not crazy. You know you want a Baywatch game.

—Beau Wilson

Yeah...no.

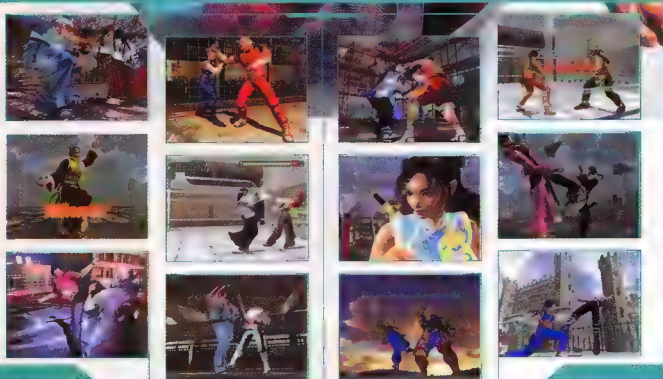




# Virtua EVOLUTION VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 Signature



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PlayStation 2



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## sputtering outrage

### Designer imposter

I am writing in response to your interview with Elijah Wood (*EGM* #166), star of the *Lord of the Rings* movies. My colleagues and I are somewhat frustrated about a comment you made to him at the end of the interview. You asked Elijah Wood if he would be in a new game, *Lord of the Bedspings: Eleven Girls Gone Wild*. By stating this, you have humiliated and destroyed the entire purpose of our club (to support Elijah Wood while maintaining morale [sic] values). Thus, as an online community and highly respected celebrity association, we cannot allow ourselves to continue reading your magazine.

Although many of our members are *EGM* readers, due to the unfortunate circumstances, they have publicly announced that they no longer support *EGM*, as it has no respect for morals. Our club is highly ranked in fan clubs, and I am sure that other readers who know we have cancelled our subscriptions will do the same. I am sure that this would be a great loss.

—Charles Deeter

President of the Official Elijah Wood Fan Club

[sarcastic clapping] Do you think we're idiots? Google rumbled you in about five seconds. The president of Elijah Woods' fan club is actually a gal named Colleen Lynch. And is she gonna be angry when she hears about this.



### Pad problems

Why isn't there a Super Nintendo controller adapter for GameCube? *Capcom* vs. *SNK 2* would be a helluva lot better, and I don't think that GameCube pad that looks like a SNES controller would cut the mustard. I leave it to the fine folks at *EGM* to bitch and complain to someone who will actually give a damn. I want that adapter, gentlemen (and women), and I believe you can make it happen. Either that or I'll curl up in the fetal position and weep uncontrollably.

—Cullen

Why no SNES controller adapter for GameCube? That's like asking why game controllers don't just plug directly into the base of your spine; we could give you an answer, but it'd be



## word on the street

### ■ WHAT INNOVATIONS DO YOU HOPE THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSOLES WILL BRING TO GAMING?



I want to see screens built into the controllers. For those private moments like picking your play in a football game, it's definitely a plus. Sega has something with the Dreamcast's VMU, and Nintendo's G2/GBA link-up expands the idea even more like using them to their full potential.

—Sean McCann



Online components in the box, license software that utilizes the online-enabled hardware, Capcom's Street Fighter III third-party control deck and pedals licensed to all three companies and issued as standard controllers, and more games that focus on the trials and tribulations of a young man named Ryo Hazuki (*Street Fighter*). If you can't

—Chris Jones



I would love to be able to buy all the console maker's earlier games directly out of the memory of the system. For example: Sony's PlayStation 1 and 2 games; Nintendo's NES, SNES, and GameCube games (and all previous Sega console games...I can dream); and Microsoft's Xbox 360 library. There'd be a little description of the game if you wanted to buy it, you'd enter your credit info and then the game would be automatically downloaded, whatever.

—Andrew Baker



Absolutely nothing but games! I don't want a DVD player, and I don't want power windows. Cup holders would be nice, but stick to games. There's what consoles are for.

—Chris Jones

■ If you'd like to participate in Word on the Street, check our message boards at [www.egmimg.com](http://www.egmimg.com).

### OOPS!

Seanbaby's *The Rest of the Crap* section isn't meant to be taken seriously—that's why games don't get scores. However, we apologize for not catching the "amazingly bad game with amazingly worse packaging" line in the *Karnaaj Rally* review (*EGM* #167, page 142), considering Seanbaby said explicitly that he was reviewing the box art, not the game (and also that he never tried the game). We will give *Karnaaj Rally* a normal review in an upcoming issue.





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Letters

## Postmodern videogaming

Your small boxset on Artsy-Fartsy Invaders (EGM #167, page 48) about destroying the text of postmodernist Michel Foucault, *Space Invaders*-style, made me realize that critical theory has not entered into the discourse of videogames. Existential themes like meaninglessness, dread, and individual accountability are present in most games. If critical theory took on the gaming industry, the deconstruction of videogames could lead to the rethinking of games as texts that reflect the genealogy of culture and society. Imagine leading theorists deconstructing the anthropomorphic characters in *Animal Crossing*, or the discourse of the *Final Fantasy* series being viewed as a reclamation of language!



■ Michel Foucault: not a big gamer

—Matt Henley

We imagined it, all right. We are now officially encouraging the letter-writing public to inundate us with incomprehensible game-related philosophical treatises—not that we don't get those already, mind. Keep it short.

## "Can you give me Brett Isaacoff's phone number?"

—shung\_monkey

completely made up. Have you actually tried Hori's SNES-like GameCube pad, though? It's great. Of course, you can't buy it here, but you can order it through importers like ncsx.com for about \$22.

## Cheaters always win

I would like to start by saying that *SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs* has to be one of the best games ever for PlayStation 2. However, "game enhancer" cheat devices like CodeBreaker, Action Replay, GameShark, etc., are ruining the game. There is a code for the CodeBreaker that allows players to respawn as a ghost after they die—so they're invisible, but still able to kill others. Another code disables the ability of users to vote the cheater off the server, ruining the game for everyone else. *SOCOM* developer Zipper Interactive and Sony need to step in and kick these people off. If you're against cheating, please sign the petition at [www.petitiononline.com/cheatsoc/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/cheatsoc/petition.html) and help save *SOCOM*.

—Mark Mazur

## EGM dating service

Well, that Brett Isaacoff (Letters, EGM

#166) is sexier than Vampire Hunter D and Matthew Good. Although Matthew Good still has the coolness factor...and Vampire Hunter D is a fictional character, which kind of puts a damper on things. Can you give me Brett Isaacoff's phone number? He can play me beautiful music with his bagpipes anytime.

—shung\_monkey@hotmail.com

We don't see it, but whatever. Brett specifically asked us not to reveal his digits—perhaps he knew his visage would cause general swooning among the female population. You'll just have to make do with this picture, sealed with a kiss by also-dreamy Copy Editor Greg Ford. Enjoy! ☺



## OOPS!

I guess you guys were in a pretty festive mood last month, what with the magazine redesign and all. However, I'm not sure tossing freebie gold awards around was the right way to celebrate. *Midnight Club II* may be a fine game, but it's not fine enough to bend the laws of arithmetic:  $(9.0 + 8.0 + 9.5)/3 = 8.83$ . Cheers on an otherwise spiffy change!

—Brian Handly

Oops. *Midnight Club II* should have earned a silver award. Dang new math, who understands it?



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**Monko Polo**

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**Natalie**

*Most Likely to Lose Her Wits*



**Marshall**

*Most Likely to Punch the Ref*



**Larry**

*Most Likely to Step in Monkey Poo*



**Mr. White**

*Most Likely to Be an Evil Scientist*



**Balboa**

*Most Likely to Live in a Meat Locker*



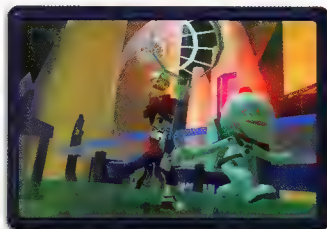
**Norman**

*Most Likely to Drive a Humvee*



**Specter**

*Most Likely to Take Over the World*





# Catching Madness



**Leo**

*Most Likely to Catch a Fever*



**Stephenson**

*Most Likely to Walk the Plank*



**Jimmy**

*Most Likely to Save the World*



**George**

*Most Likely to Be Inquisitive*



**Buzz**

*Most Likely to Walk Like a Space*



**Arthur**

*Most Likely to Get Pierced*



**Parka**

*Most Likely to Chill*



**Punto**

*Most Likely to Sink the Gondola*



**Cleo**

*Most Likely to Walk Like an Egyptian*



**Yellow Monkey**

*Most Likely to Be a Pro Wrestler*



**Libby**

*Most Likely to Swim to Ellis Island*



**Spud**

*Most Likely to Be a Hypnotist*

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PlayStation.2





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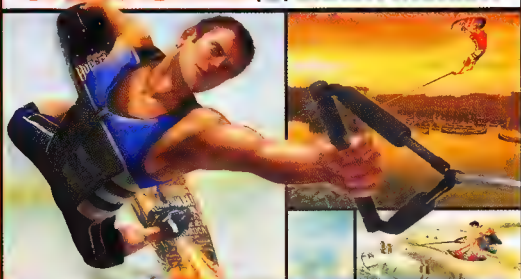
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# press start

gaming news, interviews, reformed gangsters, and other stuff

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Is it too early to look toward the next wave of game consoles? Yeah, but EGM does it anyway—with your help!

**T**he future is scary enough, what with the threat of mutant killer flus and an infinite lineup of *Who Wants to Marry a Zillionaire Space Alien?* reality shows. Combine that with the certainty that our game consoles will be obsolete in three years and we're ready for deep carbon freeze. But ignoring the grinding wheels of progress—and the cycle of the game-hardware market—is no longer possible, now that rumors of the next systems are flying and our industry moans are starting to blab.

Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo are engaged in

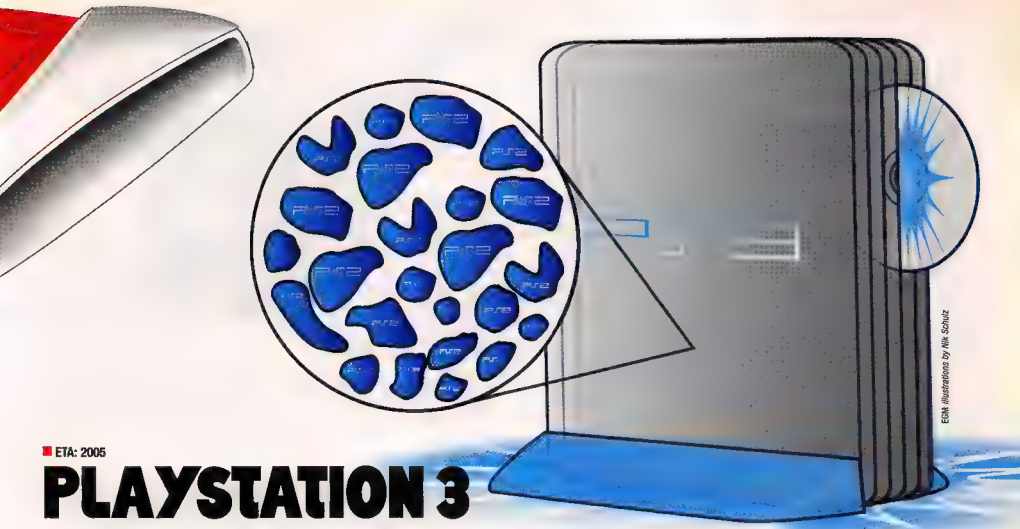
heavy game theory, sizing up each other's plans and trying to figure out when to unleash the new consoles. If Sony tries to milk profits from PlayStation 2, then the debut of all three follow-up systems could be pushed back to 2006. But go-time will come sooner if a rival launches a console in 2005. One thing's for sure: Sony won't have the year-long head start it enjoyed in the last generation. As Chief Xbox Officer Robbie Bach says, "We won't be late this time." EGM decided to be early. We've pulled together everything we've heard about the next wave of systems, thrown in some rampant speculation, and invited you, the readers, to send us your concepts—the niftiest of which appear right here on this page.

Now, we just have to wait for about two years to see if any of us is right.



Illustrations by: 1) Andy Hopper, created first for GMR magazine; 2) D.J. Dalton; 3) Mark Gullikson; 4) Anonymous, via the Internet; 5) Anonymous, via the Internet; 6) Dmitry Pavlovsky; 7) Tim Forbrook; 8) Eric Pinder; 9) Paulo Pires; 10) Jeremy Cullis; 11) Anonymous, via the Internet





ESM illustrations by Will Schatz

■ ETA: 2005

# PLAYSTATION 3

## Sony banks big on cellular theory

Sony declined our request for a comment on its PS3 strategy, but the company has already spilled the guts of its gameplan in a few ways. In 2002, Shinichi Okamoto, chief technology officer for Sony's games unit, outlined the technology the company will use as the brains of its third-generation machine. The system will pack a new microprocessor jointly developed by Sony, Toshiba, and IBM at an estimated R&D cost of \$400 million. "Moore's Law is too slow for us," Okamoto said, referring to the computer-geek axiom that chip performance doubles roughly every 18 months. "We can't wait 20 years to achieve a thousand-fold increase in PlayStation performance."

Recent patent disclosures show that PS3's "cell-computing" architecture will pack many processors onto a single chip, as opposed to just the one processor that's on conventional chips. This cell technology—described as a "supercomputer on a chip"—will break down processing duties and assign them to the various processors. In a way, it works like a beehive, in which tasks are parceled out to specific worker bees.

Since programming duties could even be buzzed across a network—passed via PS3's sure-to-be-included broadband connection—there's wild speculation that the system could tap other machines over the Internet for extra processing power. Okamoto said the console would be capable of 1 trillion floating-point operations per second, or the processing equivalent of 100 Pentium 4 chips (just one of these chips serves as the brains of a modern PC).

Graphics-card makers Nvidia and ATI Technologies are itching to get their technology inside PS2's successor, but Sony's engineers could simply dedicate a separate cell chip to the task of crunching graphics. However, Nvidia CEO Jen-Hsun Huang says that bypassing the graphics-chip makers'

shader technologies would be a big mistake. (Shaders are miniprograms that can quickly and easily draw effects such as reflective surfaces.)

The reaction from game developers is mixed. Some express awe at the machine's proposed power. But others, like Epic (*Unreal Championship*) President Tim Sweeney, say it would be virtually impossible to program games for a system with so many processors working in parallel. "I've never heard

processing for a single game across a network, since the delays in fetching results from a remote console are huge compared to the speed of internal processing.

Beyond the chip front, we've heard much speculation that the next generation of Sony's machine will act as a home server, with a hard drive, TiVo-like recording capabilities, PS1 and PS2 backwards compatibility, and Web-browsing capabilities. "Sony's next box will make good on the unfulfilled

Philips' Of course, Sony made the same prelaunch pie-in-the-sky predictions about PS2, and three years later, we're still waiting for the hard-drive add-on. One chipmaker says Sony may include CD- or DVD-burning capabilities in its next box. Rumors suggest that Blu-Ray, a technology co-developed by Sony that fills discs with five DVDs' worth of data, will also be used. But the old question remains: Is this box for gamers or for an entire family looking to control all of its digi-

**"Using a ton of processors in parallel would be very difficult. It's already hard to use the processors in the PS2 correctly."**

—A developer who spoke on condition of anonymity

from Sony [about] how they intend for people to use the hardware," Sweeney says. "I can't imagine how you will actually program [for that console]." Meanwhile, Peter Gaskowsky, editor of *Microprocessor Report*, says it doesn't make sense to spread the

promise of the PlayStation 2." Okamoto said in a speech to game developers. "It will compete not only with game consoles from Nintendo and Microsoft, but also with PCs from the likes of Dell...and Hewlett-Packard, and with TV set-top boxes from Motorola and

tal entertainment? And since the processes to mass produce cell chips will be unavailable until at least 2005, could Sony run into the same manufacturing problems that plagued the PS2 graphics chip and led to shortages at the system's launch?

## the future is (sorta) now

**SO IT'S NOT THE PS3—OR EVEN THE PS2.5—BUT IT'S STILL NEW**

Can't wait for PS3? Then look to Japan, where a new PlayStation has already landed. Don't get too excited—it's actually just a PS2 with a few key enhancements for the same price. The biggest tweak: The unit can play DVDs in progressive scan, a higher-res video mode for Richie-Rich gamers who own high-definition televisions. Other enhancements include a built-in receiver for the DVD remote, the ability to play home-burned DVD-R videos, and a new cooling fan that makes 30 percent less racket. But all that unbelievable luxury comes with one less sacrifice: The FireWire port, which allows system-link gameplay in a few titles, has been removed from this model. Sony won't confirm whether this re-engineered PS2 will come Stateside, but we expect it to arrive eventually.

■ The new PS2 lacks a FireWire port and has two new remote buttons—Open/Close (for disc system's disc tray) and Power. Time to fire the gentleman manservant who turns on your PS2.







■ ETA: 2005

# XBOX 2

## Generation Y may do more than play games

Microsoft's next box, code-named Xenon (after the inert, colorless gas—no fart jokes please), is scheduled for a 2005 release, according to developers we spoke with. Expect it once again to be based on PC technology, with a single Intel or AMD microprocessor or multiple Intel chips working together in multiprocessing fashion like today's servers do. The advantage for Microsoft: The use of conventional chips worked fine with Xbox, allowing the company to make its processor choice late in the

game and still field a box relatively quickly. The disadvantage is that an off-the-shelf Intel chip may be no match for the performance Sony has in mind with its cell processor. Another disadvantage of multiple chips: Programming for the console could become much more difficult.

Meanwhile, ATI Technologies and Nvidia—the company that supplied the graphics technology for the original Xbox—continue to bid for the right to provide Xenon's graphics chip. Microsoft may even

consider developing its own chip; the Xenon project inherited designers from Microsoft's WebTV team. However, it's unlikely this untested group can pull off an extremely sophisticated graphics chip. On the other hand, it's more than likely the box will use WebTV's digital-video recording capability to store TV programs on its hard drive. Microsoft officials have been taking bids

from hard-drive manufacturers for Xenon, claiming they need 40GB drives (the current Xbox's drive is 8GB).

We fully expect the next Xbox—like the original—to come with a built-in broadband port and to continue driving the growth of Xbox Live, Microsoft's sophisticated online gaming service.

■ ETA: 2005  
on a GameCube successor due out "around the same time as rival makers' [consoles]." The only solid information so far is that Nintendo will once again tap ATI Technologies, the Canada-based graphics-

solely on Wavebird-like wireless controllers. Given Nintendo's we-only-care-about-games philosophy, it's a safe bet the Cube follow-up will lack the home-server/set-top-box features Sony and Microsoft are hyped about. We

# CUBE<sup>2</sup>

## Is online in the gameplan?

While Sony and Microsoft officials might hold out hope that Nintendo—like Sega—will give up on the hardware business, Nintendo President Satoru Iwata has confirmed the company is working

...we expect the console will rely solely on Wavebird-like wireless controllers.

chip maker. Odds are pretty good that Nintendo will also use IBM and the PowerPC microprocessor architecture again.

Otherwise, we figure Nintendo's next system will support or link up with whatever Game Boy iteration is ruling portable gaming in 2005, and we expect the console will rely

are hoping, however, that Nintendo will finally incorporate built-in online features into its system. The only other big question mark is the system's shape. Nintendo's already done a cube. What's next? A pyramid?

Hey, it could happen. —Dean Takahashi

## nightmare Future

### THE BEST OF THE WORST READER CONCERNS

Some of you readers, bless your hearts, didn't let laziness or lack of artistic talent or a crippling mental handicap stop you from submitting sketches and renderings of the next systems. Avert your eyes from these reader-made concepts that are so bad, they're good—and, in good, we mean just plain awful.







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PRESS START



## SHADY'S DEAL

Eminem  
"Loses  
Himself"  
in first  
videogame

As hip-hop heads are aware, there's a thin line between fan and "Stan." Just ask Conspiracy Entertainment. At this summer's Electronic Entertainment Expo game-biz show, the publisher will show off PS1 budget title *Stan Presents Eminem*, the first title to tribute to rapper Marshall "Slim Shady" Mathers. Due in June, the game uses video clips from timeless family flicks like "The Real Slim Shady" and "Stan." Marne is a puzzle game with traditional mini-games. Those tiles you place to make a picture? Well, they're Eminem. As a form of "schmooze appreciation," the game is the first in a proposed series of PS1 pop-culture-themed offerings that will be for a decidedly non-hip-hopbing 10 bucks a pop. —Scott Steinberg

## GRUDGE MATCH

Nerd vision vs. night vision in the final staredown



## MAX FISCHER VS. SAM FISHER

Sure, *Splinter Cell*'s Sam Fisher is crafty and good with the stealth kills, but he never wrote a hit play, attempted to seduce a first-grade teacher, or saved Latin like *Rushmore*'s Max Fischer. They're both sneaky bastards, to be sure, but there can be only one Fis(c)her king....

### THE UNIFORM

Crested blue blazer, glasses...here?

Flattering fatigues, slimming fanny pack, gun holster, night-vision goggles  
**Advantage: Sam**

### MAIN SQUEEZE

The beautiful Brit teacher gets away, but Max still ends up with a cute (and age-appropriate) nerd girl  
**Advantage: Max**

The trigger of his 5.72mm SC Pistol

### WEAPON OF CHOICE

Pellet gun capable of pissing off a Scotsman from three yards

SC-20K M.A.W.S. rifle capable of bringing down nonfriendlies from 1,000 feet  
**Advantage: Sam**

### NAME ANAGRAM

Fox me Chris

Smash Fire  
**Advantage: Smash**

### LIKELY TO BE PLAYED IN TV MOVIE BY

Paul Pfeiffer from *The Wonder Years*

That dreamy George Clooney  
**Advantage: Unless Whinnie Cooper stars opposite Paul...Sam**

### SEQUEL POTENTIAL

His theatrical adaptation of *Xx*, set in ancient Greece, earns him a postgraduate year at Rushmore

Has at least one follow-up mission left before getting too old for this game  
**Advantage: Sam**

### LAST MAN STANDING: Sam Fisher

Sam finally disarms the Rushmore dropout and caps him right through the goofy hat as the Cat Stevens fades in.

## NEWS BITS: READ THEM ALL AND YOU CAN HAVE DESSERT



When Lady Miss' life was Ulaa, we all lose.

### DEE-DEE-LAWSUIT

The divine Lady Miss is the now-defunct band Dee-Dee-Life is suing Sega \$750,000, claiming that Ulaa, the main character of Sega's *Space Channel 5* series, copies her "dis-provvy" image. The lawsuit, filed in federal court, seeks \$750,000 in damages.

### A GETAWAY MOVIE

How weird is this—a film based on a game based on a style of Guy Ritchie's films? According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, a big-screen version of Sony's *The Getaway* is scheduled to start production in 2004 and hit theaters in 2005. The game's sequel, *The Getaway 2*, is also in development.

### ARE YOU READY FOR SOME QUIDDITY?

We called this one. EA recently announced a new *Pottery* game that could be right in their sports line—Harry Potter: *Quidditch World Cup*, coming to all consoles. We hope John Wick play is a given. Madden will be accompanying.







# Savage by nature.

Play as young knight, Seig Warheit, who must face off  
against an old friend in this gothic action adventure.

To fight, summon and command seven different warrior legions  
each with their own signature weaponry.

Chaos Legion...a graphic masterpiece and savage gothic opera  
played out over 13 levels of real time, cut-throat action!

*"If you loved Devil May Cry,  
you'll love Chaos Legion!" - PSM*

## CHAOS LEGION

PlayStation 2

CAPCOM  
capcom.com



Blood  
Violence



# NINTENDO SPEEDS AHEAD

The big N rolls out its big titles for fall

**T**wo pair in poker, that ain't so hot. But two pair of new Nintendo games? That'll get us reaching for our wallets. Check out a couple now sequels that stress two-player game-play and a couple remade classics, all due later this year. As for more screens and hands-on impressions next month, you can bet on it.



## MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH

It's always tough to do other things while you're driving—changing a CD, making a call on your cell phone, nailing the guy on your tail with a turtle shell, etc.—and that's a problem Nintendo plans to address in this GameCube update to its battle/racing franchise. Pair up any two *Mario* characters, then place one up front to drive while the other rides shotgun off the back, tossing items to help you get (and keep) the lead. You'll find special items only certain contestants can use, so it's a good thing you can swap partners on the fly. Oh, and two- to four-player spiltcreen won't be the only multiplayer—hook up two GameCubes via broadband adapters and play with up to eight (mama mia!) people at once on two TVs.



## PIKMIN 2

Like *Mario Kart*, this sequel to Nintendo's (sort of) real-time strategy game stresses the joys of cooperation: Big-nosed astronaut Captain Olimar has brought along his assistant this time, and together (either two-player spiltcreen or single player and switching between them), the two will raise an army of the ant-like Pikmin plant people, commanding them to attack enemies, retrieve treasure, destroy obstacles, or do whatever other dirty work stands in the way. Two new types of Pikmin—purple and white—join the old cast of yellow, red, and blue. And since each color has its own unique ability, that means new gameplay. Plus, *Pikmin 2* has no time limit, so hopefully, it will last longer than the short-but-sweet original.





■ Hopped up on magic mushrooms and fire flowers, Mario and Luigi didn't spot Captain Olimar and his assistant crossing the road until it was too late.



## METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES

GameCube owners, lemme hear ya say "ye-ah!" *Metal Gear's* espionage action sneaks its way back onto a Nintendo system as *Eternal Darkness* developer Silicon Knights (under the watchful eyes of Nintendo and Konami) handles this remake of the original *MGS*. No screenshots yet; only the new artwork you see above, showing hero Solid Snake (on the left) and his evil genetic twin Liquid Snake—the "Twin Snakes" from the title, in case you were wondering. We expect at least *MGS2*-caliber graphics and gameplay features (like the ability to switch to a first-person view for shooting), plus a few new surprises, but we'll know much more by next issue, after we've given it the once-over at the Electronic Entertainment Expo.



## SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4

OK, *Super Mario Advance 4* is actually a graphically enhanced version of the 8-bit Nintendo classic *Super Mario Bros. 3*, which is why it looks almost identical to the last *Mario 3* remake included on Super Nintendo's *Super Mario All-Stars*. Confused? Don't be. All you really need to know is that this game takes the 2D platforming foundation laid by the original *Super Mario Bros.* and powers it up with 100 mushrooms' worth of improvements—tons of new enemies, new powers for Mario (fly, slide, and turn into a statue, among others), and more than sixty levels that put them all to the test. Yes, it's one of the greatest games of all time, and no, we can't wait to play it in portable form. 🍄

—Mark MacDonald





Somewhere right now, big robots—such as these mechas—are totally whaling on each other.

# INSTANT EXPERT: ANIME

From zero to otaku in 60 seconds

If you think anime (say it right: ah-ni-may) is a sticky tree sap used by varnish makers, then you're absolutely right—and absolutely weird ('cause, like, why do you know that?). You're also missing out on a type of made-in-Japan animation that goes hand in sweaty hand with game culture. Study up to fily your way into the import-store crowd...

## He is your god

Start worshipping Hayao Miyazaki, the writer/director/lead animator of *Princess Mononoke*, *Kiki's Delivery Service*, *Castle in the Sky*, and 2002's Oscar-winning *Spirited Away*, all available on DVD.

## Don't get caught without these classics...

- **Neon Genesis Evangelion**—An artsy, psychological action-drama series that has become an anime legend.
- **Akira**—A sci-fi masterpiece, as stylish as it is nonsensical.
- **Love Hina**, **Tenchi Muyo**, and **Ranma 1/2**—Among the best series in the popular "wacky romantic-comedy" genre.
- **Grave of the Fireflies**—A beautiful, tragic gut-punch of a movie.

## Build street cred with these terms...

- **Hentai**—Means "pervert." Also used to describe the pornographic anime subgenre (which may involve tentacles).
- **Mecha**—Anime subgenre that stars super-duper robots.
- **Otaku**—An extreme fan, someone likely to dress up as his or her favorite character, watch only Japanese-subtitled shows, and bitch on the Internet about American anime companies.



## Bone up for nothin'

The Cartoon Network is hip to anime, with so-so kid-friendly shows like *Dragon Ball Z* and *Yu Yu Hakusho* airing in the afternoons and edgier fare like *Trigun* in the wee-hour Adult Swim lineup. Best of all is the stylish

*Cowboy Bebop*, on Sunday through Thursday at 1 a.m. EST. Oh, don't go blowing \$25 on a DVD without reading a review at [animeondvd.com](http://animeondvd.com) or [animenewsnetwork.com](http://animenewsnetwork.com). And be on guard for that whole tentacle thing.

—Casey Lee

## OLD SCHOOL 10 years ago in EGM

On the cover: Jungle Strike/Jurassic Park



## Game of the Month:

### Pocky & Rocky

We won't hold it against you if you've never heard of Natsume's top-down, vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up *Pocky & Rocky*. But this cartoony one- or two-player game set in feudal Japan and starring a cute female priestess and her trusty raccoon pal sure scored well with the Review Crew. If you're curious, check out the recent portable version for your Game Boy Advance (*Pocky & Rocky and Baby*).

## Virtual Calamity

After the movie *The Lawnmower Man* made the term "virtual reality" a household word, Sega jumped on the bandwagon with Sega VR—a head-mounted display for its 16-bit Genesis. "Sega VR will change the way people play and are entertained at home," Tom Kalinske, then Sega's president and CEO, said at its June '93 debut. The \$200 device and four planned games (which all sucked, frankly) never saw the light of day.

## Three-Dee-Wha?

In 1993, 3DO had hopes of making the next big console. Its 3DO Multiplayer was shown in public for the first time that year before going on sale for \$700. A rep for the project stated, "We're doing everything we can to establish 3DO as the next standard in consumer electronics." Yep, right up there with Betamax.

## Big Cat

Also in June '93, Atari laid out plans to release its Jaguar game system. We now know it would eventually fail, but at first, the Jag sounded so...nitty. "The idea of a 64-bit system is earth-shattering, and kids and adults will be amazed at both the imagery and manipulative capabilities," said Atari President Sam Tramiel.

"And we are proud that our entry will be fully made in America."

Yes, people really used to talk like that.



## BY THE NUMBERS

Raw data that proves you are not gaming alone

41%

Percentage of Americans who say they'll buy at least one game in 2003. Percentage of those people who will actually finish the games they buy? We're gonna guess 10%.

145,000,000

The number of Americans who say they played videogames and computer games in 2002. GTA, anyone?

221,000,000

The number of games sold in 2002 in those 145 million people (about one-and-a-half games per person).

\$6,900,000,000

The amount of money these 145 million people spent on games in 2002 (\$5.5 billion on console games).





Milk make bones strong. Bones no break when Hulk drink milk.

got milk?

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# AFTERTHOUGHTS: THE SIMS

Pestering the guy who lets us play God

**E**verything's better with videogames, even basic bodily functions. That's one lesson we've learned since *The Sims*, the hugely popular life simulator, invaded all three consoles. Another thing we've learned is that holding a conversation with Michael Perry, design director for *The Sims*, is tough. There's the whole subpar personal hygiene issue, and then every couple minutes he jumps up, sprints to the bathroom, goes and makes lunch, or possibly gets in the hot tub (where, curiously, we're always compelled to join him). He talks in this funny Charlie Brown's teacher's language, and what's with all the weird pictograms? Oh wait, we were just having another *Sims* dream. Never mind.

**EGM:** Is there anything you tried for the console version that had to be cut or just didn't work?

**Michael Perry:**

Yeah, we tried a few different things. For a while we were trying to decide if we should add a lot of traditional console elements to *The Sims*, meaning action, button-mashing stuff. We even had a design where the player could have their Sim bump into objects and these little karma coins would pop out. And it seemed like a great idea for a game like *Sonic*, but *The Sims* is such a unique gameplay experience that it felt like it wasn't *The Sims* anymore.

**EGM:** What do you think of the TV commercial with the plastic-looking mother and daughter playing strip poker? Or did we misread what was going on there entirely?

**MP:** [laughs] I love that commercial. When we created new objects exclusive to the console versions of *The Sims*, we really tried to come up with some of the craziest things we could think of, and the strip poker table and the bug zapper were two of the first we designed. During the process we tried to think of how they would look in an ad or on TV, so it's great to see the strip poker table made it into the commercial.

**EGM:** You came up with some pretty bizarre ones, like the monkey butler and teppanyaki table—was anything too far out there to make the cut?

**MP:** We were experimenting with some two-player, kinda button-mashing game objects—games you could put in your backyard. While we could make each one of these into fun little minigames, well, it didn't feel like *The Sims* anymore. It felt more appropriate for something like *Super Monkey Ball*. So maybe they weren't really far-out objects, but they weren't *Sims*-style objects.

**EGM:** So is there a nude code or what? The

world wants to know! Presumably.

**MP:** There isn't one in the game itself, but if you get some of the cheat hardware, you can do it with that.

**EGM:** Has anyone broken the news to [Sims creator] Will Wright that the videogame version of *Battlebots* has been cancelled, seeing as how he's such a fan of the show and all?

**MP:** I don't know. Will has a really cool place [in Berkeley, CA] called the Stupid Fun Club, which is full of robots. If you've ever wanted to feel like you're living inside a videogame, that's the place. *—Dennin Linn*



## summer fashion tips

When it comes to Sim fashion, we stick with the mustachioed balding guy wearing hot pants, sock garters, and little else. But that's us. If you're more of a *Sims* clotheshorse, Design Director Michael Perry has a hot tip for you: Be social. "Every Sim you meet has a unique skin—mohawks, liberty spikes, miniskirts, etc.—that you can put on your own Sim," he says. "And the way to unlock all those skins is to make friends with every last one." So there you have it. Now get out there and talk, talk, joke, talk, and compliment your little heart out.





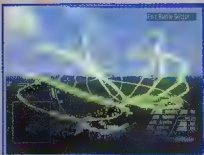
*Strike hard, strike fast  
and strike deep.*

# NAVAL OPS

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July 2003



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**RP-E**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
**ESRB**



"In war there is no substitute for victory" - General MacArthur

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# THE MOVIE

A slick new breed of big-screen videogames proves that the game biz has finally figured out how to play nice with Hollywood





# GAME: RELOADED

**S**omewhere in the deserts of New Mexico lies a potent reminder of the checkered history of movie-based videogames. It's there that in September 1983, 14 tractor trailers pulled up to a landfill and dumped their cargo: 5 million unsold Atari 2600 cartridges of *E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial*, the videogame based on Stephen Spielberg's classic film. The game—which cost \$20 million to license and was developed in only six weeks—was a failure of epic proportions, largely because of its cruddy gameplay (most copies were returned to stores). It also ushered in the long-standing trend of blat games based on blockbuster flicks. For years, seeing a movie game on a store shelf was akin to spying Pauly Shore's name on a movie poster. The message: Run for your life.

But things may be changing. Movie games are going through a creative renaissance, fueled by a burgeoning collaborative relationship between Hollywood and the games industry, and the stigma of the movie game as a cheap cash-in is melting away. While we've played a handful of good movie

games (*Aladdin* for Genesis, *GoldenEye* for Nintendo 64), they've been the exception rather than the rule. But lately, several solid movie titles have hit in rapid-fire succession. It started last year with the better-than-average *Spider-Man* and the even better *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. This year, games like the just-released *Enter the Matrix* are showing how far the relationship between developers and filmmakers has come. Gone are the days of movie-themed titles that seemed to exist only to lure in

matching a great movie license with a great game can be an explosive combination. The proof is in the numbers: Last year's *Two Towers* game earned Electronic Arts \$175 million, more than what most movies make at the box office. Similarly, Activision's *Spider-Man* has racked up more than \$200 million in sales. Not surprisingly, those blockbuster figures have changed the way film executives approach movie games. In the past, "executives making [movie game] deals couldn't give a rat's ass about what

with rushed production schedules and lousy sales. Now, after years of this vicious cycle repeating itself, executives finally understand that a movie star's face on a game box won't trick people into parting with their cash. License or not, it's the game inside the box that matters.

Along with realizing the importance of gameplay, film producers and directors are also beginning to show interest in games as a storytelling medium. "Filmmakers used to see films as the apex of a [property's] uni-

**"No one looks at the *Godfather* film and says, 'Oh, it's just an attempt to cash in on the book.'"**

—Electronic Arts Producer Neil Young

mainstream consumers who don't know any better. Today's movie games aspire to be gripping experiences that complement and expand on rich film universes

Why the change? In short, Hollywood and the games industry finally realized that

kind of game experience would fall out on the other end," says Shiny President Dave Perry, designer of *Enter the Matrix*. "[The executives] were just making money, putting together deals." But more often than not, those deals resulted in shoddy movie games

verse, and everything else was derivative, like lunch pails and action figures," explains Paul Baldwin, VP of marketing at *Tomb Raider* publisher Eidos. "But now, games are the first merchandising opportunity where

(continued on page 48)

PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube

## THE HULK

VU Games in Movie: June 29 Game: Out now.

As the *Hulk* film arrives in theaters, it already has a sequel: the videogame. [The *Hulk* game] is deliberately set after the events of the movie, with a new story line that extends beyond the film," says Nicholas Longano of Vivendi Universal. The game also blends the movie's story with the Hulk's comic-book roots, adding villains such as Flux, Rampage, and Half-Life. Although the game has a unique story line, it's still tied to the movie. "We had access to the sets and access to the digital effects work being done during production," says Longano. One product of this collaboration is the in-game model of the Hulk, which "was created with the help of Industrial Light & Magic, the company responsible for the movie's visual effects. The actor who plays the Hulk, Eric Bana, also lends his voice and likeness to the game. (You play as both Bruce Banner and his destructive alter ego.) And while on his own will confirm it, we've heard that by closely watching the movie, players may gain insights into the game's hidden features. So pay attention! "We think a great theatrically inspired game can only serve to boost the franchise as a whole," explains Longano. For once, it's going to be easy being green.

Hulk wasn't 'You of course, But Hulk sneak? Well, sorta. As wimpy Bruce Banner, you must avoid bad guys.

ELECTRONIC GAMES (XBOX ONLY) : [www.ageronline.com](http://www.ageronline.com) 47



# TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES

[illegible]

the game can match the cinematic and emotional appeal of a film." Filmmakers like Sam Raimi (*Spider-Man*), Peter Jackson (*Lord of the Rings*), Jonathan Mostow (*Terminator 3*), Ang Lee (*The Hulk*), and the Wachowskis brothers (*The Matrix*) have started collaborating with game developers. Just ask Shiny's Perry, who thought he'd have to beg to get one exclusive movie scene for *Enter the Matrix*. As it turned out, the Wachowskis shot an hour of film footage specifically for the game. They also gave Perry's team complete access to the film's sets and crew. Still, you have to wonder why directors are suddenly giving game companies such unprecedented resources. According to *Terminator 3* director Jonathan Mostow, it all comes down to the allure of an expanded film universe. "There's only so much story we can squeeze into a two-hour movie," Mostow says. "But the game provides limitless hours of play and a myriad of opportunities to explore [other] aspects of the *Terminator* legend."

All the accoutrements of Hollywood participation, however, don't necessarily lead to compelling gameplay. The biggest challenge for movie-game makers is delivering an experience that feels like a film but also works as a game. "If you were adapting a

PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube

# LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING

■ EA Games ■ Movie: December 2003 ■ Game: November

It turns out last year's *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* game had one very important fan: the film's director Peter Jackson.

"Peter thought we did such a good job that we're taking the collaboration to the next level this year," explains Neil Young, the page's executive producer. The no halting-sized statement, given that *The Towers* is already considered a turning point in movie-game collaborations—the game features the voices and likenesses of all the film's main cast—not to mention explicit movie footage.

So what's the next level? This year, EA has members of its game team on the set in New Zealand, working alongside the film's special-effects group. Even the movie's stunt team performed for EA's motion-capture studio. "We're taking the actual digital models for characters from the movie and putting those into the game," Young explains.

Beyond the richer access to film assets, EA is promising this year's game will have deeper gameplay and be roughly a third longer than *The Two Towers*. Best of all, Gollum finally makes an appearance. Peter wanted to keep him secret in last year's game, but this year he's definitely in there. You can see. How precious.



■ **With this ring, blood we'll shed:** Don't let the solo play in these screens fool you—*Kill* returns with co-on play.







- MAXIM

# *The* **Getaway**

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA PRESENTS A TEAM SOHO PRODUCTION STARRING DON KEMBERY RICKY HARBO ANNA EDWARDS MICHAEL PRESTON JOE RICE  
DIRECTORS OF PROGRAMMING WILLIAM BURDON AND NARESH HIRANI DIRECTOR OF ANIMATION GAVIN MOORE ART DIRECTION SAM COATES AND RAVINDER SINGH PRODUCTION DESIGN SIMON WOOD  
WRITTEN BY BRENDAN MCNAMARA AND KATIE ELLWOOD ORIGINAL SCORE ANDREW HALE GAME DESIGN CHUN WAH KONG DIRECTED BY BRENDAN MCNAMARA

MATURE



Blood  
Drug Reference  
Strong Language  
Strong Sexual Content  
Violence

PlayStation.2



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play from a book, you wouldn't have the audience sit down in a theater, hand them

a book, and say, 'Start reading,' says Neil Young, executive producer of the *Lord of the Rings* franchise at EA. "The same principle applies to movies being made into games. We have to adapt the film in a way that allows for great gameplay." Eventually, Young hopes movie games will be seen as a form of adaptation on par with how great books are turned into Oscar-winning films. "No one looks at the *Godfather* film and says, 'Oh, it's just an attempt to cash in on the book.'"

Over time, movie games may turn into more than straight adaptations. At their best, these games may give room for film universes to expand and persist long after the credits roll. This summer's *The Hulk*, for instance, tells a unique story set a year after events depicted in the film. And *Enter the Matrix* features its own story line that runs parallel to *The Matrix Reloaded*. "[All our research shows] players don't just want to replay the movie story," explains John Heinecke, Activision's director of global



brand management. For developers, the challenge becomes building a game that maintains consistency with the film universe but also includes fresh new elements. "For *Spider-Man*, gamers expect to be able to swing on webs and crawl up walls while foiling arch-villains, not racing go-carts," says Heinecke. *Star Wars Super Bombad Racing*, can we get a witness?

These new movie games also serve as a sneak preview of where videogames may go

next—as star-powered vehicles that aren't adapted from a film. French actor Jean Reno recently agreed to lend his likeness to Capcom's *Onimusha 3*. And this fall, Jet Li is starring in Sony's *Rise to Honor*. (To be fair, let's not forget the luckiest Bruce Willis PS1 title *Apocalypse*, which showed that even the biggest stars can't save a subpar game.) Perry thinks we may soon see an influx of Hollywood stars going digital. "Since we announced [*Enter the Matrix*], I

have asked movie stars if they would be willing to work with us at this level," he says. "Where they used to answer, 'Talk to my agent,' now they say 'Absolutely!'"

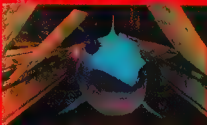
Could Tom Cruise star in *Metal Gear Solid* creator Hideo Kojima's next game? Could J. Lo show skin in *Dead or Alive: Extreme Bouncing Watersports*? E.T., you'd better phone home with the news: The curse of the movie game may finally be over. **✶**

—Geoff Keighley

## coming attractions

### ADVANCED SCREENING OF THE REST OF THE YEAR'S MOVIE GAMES

- PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube
- FINDING NEMO**
- Ubisoft
- Movie: Out now



When your beloved daughter plays this year's *Spider-Man* game, now he repeats the favor for this kiddie game based on Pixar's latest animated flick. He's got all the demographics covered except the principal crowd.

- PlayStation 2, GameCube
- CHARLIE'S ANGELS**
- Ubisoft
- Movie: Out now



Cameron, Lucy, and Drew find their likenesses to this action game based on the film franchise. Throw in a little sexy catfight and we're so there.

- PlayStation 2
- CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON**
- Ubisoft
- Movie: Out now



Based on Ang Lee's art-house chop-choy flick, this game even has Mandarin dialogue with English subtitles to keep the angsty foreigner from getting lost.

- Xbox
- PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN**
- Bethesda
- Movie: July



Based on the first game based on the movie at all times in this hefty high-seas RPG packed with plundering opportunities. Rated "Arrrrr!" Sorry.

- PlayStation 2, Xbox
- THE ITALIAN JOB**
- Eidos
- Movie: Out now



Try to keep with us: *The Italian Job* is a Mini Cooper-racing game based on the new Mark Wahlberg remake of the Michael Caine original, making it a close version of the PS1 budget driving title from two years ago. **Whee!**

- PlayStation 2
- BAD BOYS 2**
- Empire

Movie: July Game: Fall Martin Lawrence and Will Smith lead talents to this third-person action shoot 'em up. We're hoping the live "Don't hate the player—hate the game" video will make it to the big screen.

- PlayStation 2, Xbox
- BULLETPROOF MAN**
- Empire

Movie: Out now Game: Fall This third-person action-adventure

rewards on the way of the *Matrix* starring Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne. It also includes a battle-arena multiplayer mode. With Tibetan monks, the film was a mess, which makes us wonder if we really need a game that does *Shogun* and *The Matrix*.

- PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube
- HAUNTED MANSION**
- TDK Mediactive
- Movie: Fall



The game's a little like Disney's *Haunted Mansion* ride—which is about to become a movie—and stars Eddie Murphy. You can't scare us, Eddie. **Whee!**

- PlayStation 2, Xbox
- THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS**
- VU Games

Movie: Out now Game: Fall Take part in street racing with customizable cars. The primary objective: avoid getting caught by Johnny Law. The secondary objective: try to understand one word Vin Diesel says.



# EGM INTERNATIONAL

Two European games that don't involve soccer



## I AIN'T AFRAID OF NO GHOST

Important safety tip: Do not cross the streams in PS2 import Ghost Hunter. Cambridge Studio, maker of the recent PS2 macabre actioner *Primal*, is finishing up another occult-themed game—*Ghost Hunter*. In it, you play a cop-turned-ghost buster who the developers describe as a mix of Bruce Willis, Will Smith, and Brad Pitt. So, a pretty average guy.

If *Primal*'s sexy visuals are any indication, *Hunter*'s graphics should impress, but it's the way you fight the ghosts that has us intrigued. First, you have to clobber them with a special weapon that will anchor 'em to our world, and then you can unload with one of your conventional guns. If that's too much work, you can use weapons like a ghost lasso to latch on and drain a specter's energy. *Ghost Hunter* isn't listed on Sony's North American release schedule. Yet.



## APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

The Destruction Derby series gets more...uh, destructive.

Race, wreck, or mix the two in Sony Europe's upcoming PS2 car cruncher, *Destruction Derby Arenas*—and do it all online with up to 15 friends. Not only can you bang off and beat other cars, *DDA* also adds weapon and health power-ups, making this more like a traditional kart racer. Besides all the regular smashes, players can enjoy other competitive modes like a hot-potato game called Pass Da Bomb.

Taking all that destruction online (with voice support via a *SOCOM* or third-party headset) is definitely what has us most interested in this new *Derby*. Hopefully, a publisher will pick it up for the United States after it debuts in Europe late this year.

## OVERHEARD

"Ratchet's hands truly scare me. There's something about Ratchet with these huge rubber gloves running around that drives me absolutely batty."

—Mossy Day's Jak & Daxter  
Jason Rubin takes fun at fellow Sony developer Insomniac's game, Ratchet & Clank



"Jak to me was some kind of mutant elf with really bad taste in clothes."

—Insomniac's Ted Price responds

"The story is already completed. The problem is that we have not decided whether or not to move forward with designing the game yet. If there's a demand for it, we'd love to make it, but it is undecided."

—Former Sega game designer Yu Suzuki (Virtua Fighter, Virtua Racing) on the possibility of Sharmine III

## L'I' PREVIEWS: A FIRST LOOK AT JUST-ANNOUNCED GAMES

■ PlayStation 2: *Sharmine III*

### SPAWN

■ Release Date: March 2004

The previous *Spawn* games haven't been too far off right, they've been awful. (Almost as bad as the movie.) But that's not keeping Namco from trying again with a new action/adventure title that promises to

utilize all of Spawn's powers. Your safest bet still might be to play as him in the Xbox version of *Steel Caliber*.



■ Game Boy Advance

### SONIC BATTLE

■ Release Date: Early 2004

Nothing says friendship like beating one hell out of your pals. At least that's the impression Sonic Battle gives us, as its cast members trade running and jumping for punching and kicking. You and three

friends can link your GBAs for team battles, in which you can chain special attacks together. Hey, sounds better than those Happy Meal Sonic games at least.



■ GameCube

### PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EPISODE III: C.A.R.D. REVOLUTION

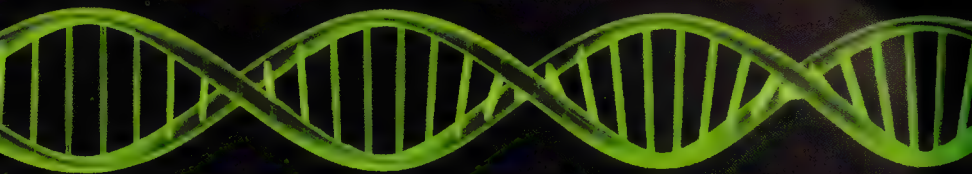
■ Release Date: Early 2004

The next *PSO* focuses on turn-based strategy combat using collectable cards, online or off. Sound strange? Maybe a little too *Pokémon*? We're just happy to be returning to Ragol, really. Sonic Team, this doesn't let you off the hook—we still want a pre-*PSO* sequel.

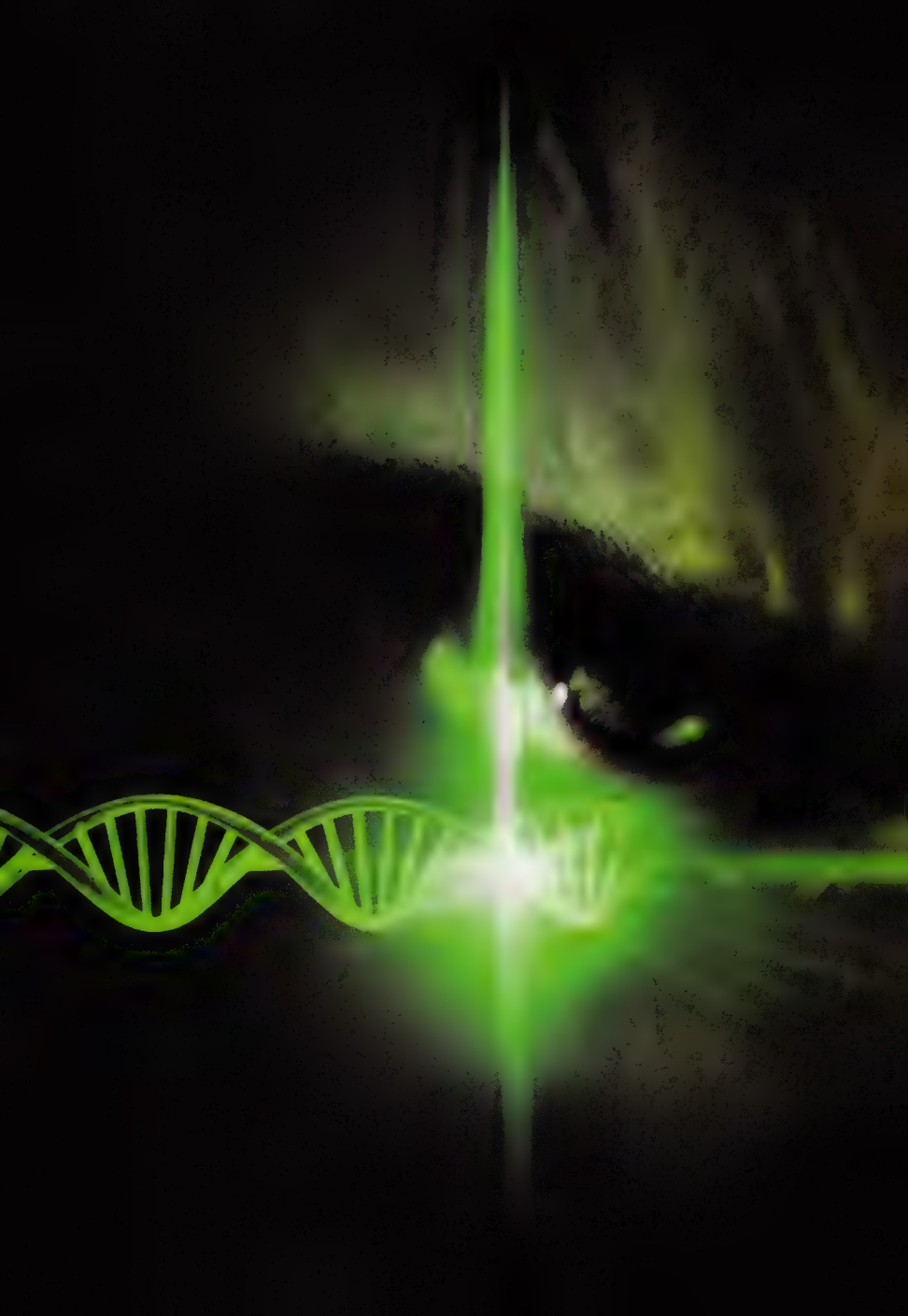




**UNLEASH THE FURY**









# HULK™

Following the events of the blockbuster Universal Pictures film, troubled scientist Dr. Bruce Banner and his enraged alter ego, *The Hulk*, battle The Leader – a terrifying villain intent on unleashing a relentless army of gamma creatures on the world. Unravel The Leader's evil plan by using the brains of Banner, and unleashing the ultimate power and destruction of The Hulk.

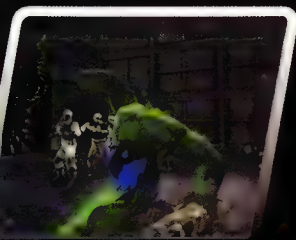
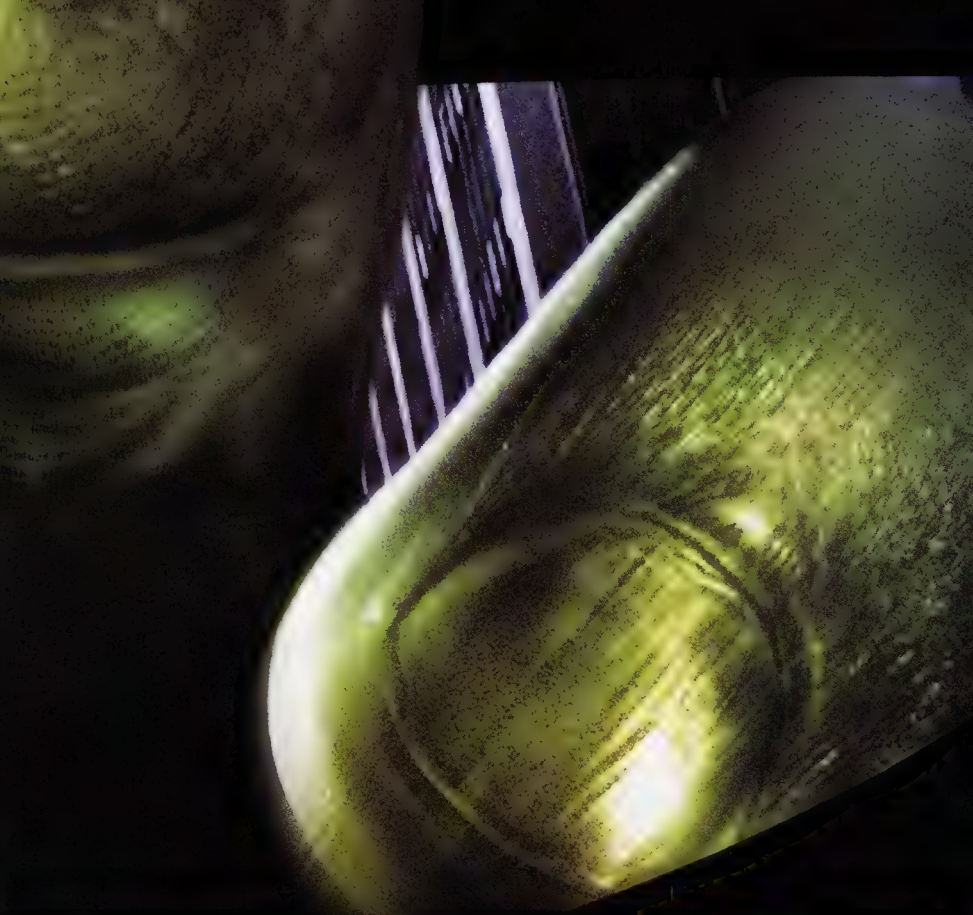


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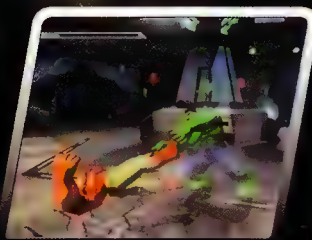




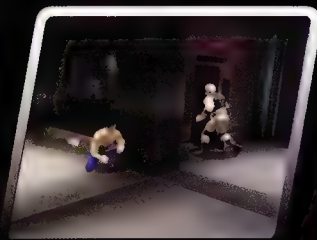




Fight up to 10 enemies at once.



Battle notorious classic villains and massive new foes.



Outsmart your enemies as Dr. Bruce Banner, using stealth and disguise.



Violence





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If you can see it, you can smash it.



PlayStation®2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



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CD-ROM  
SOFTWARE

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# RENTER'S MARKET



Online outlets can save frequent game-renters time and money

**S**ummer is upon us, and you know what that means: It's finally time to catch up on all those great games from last Christmas! (You didn't really think we were gonna say something about going outside or sunlight or something, did ya?) And what better—and

cheaper—way to do that than through online game-rental outlets? Like Netflix.com does with DVD movies, these cybershops let you keep games for as long as you want with no due dates or late fees—just a flat monthly rate. When you're done, slip the game into the postage-paid

envelope it came with and send it back. Once your vendor of choice receives your package, it'll send out the next game you've requested. Sound simple? It is. The only hard part is choosing that vendor of choice. That's why we tested five different outlets by ordering one mass-market, one

not-so-popular, and one downright niche title from each. Oh, and we threw in your friendly neighborhood Blockbuster Video just for the sake of comparison.

Prices and shipping times may vary; this highly unscientific poll was taken in March, in Los Angeles. —Jon M. Gibson

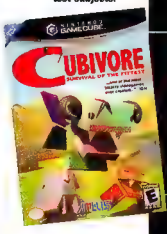


## PRICING

## PERKS



## PITFALLS



## TIME LAPSE

## THE VERDICT

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	<b>\$13.95/month</b> for one rental at a time; <b>\$21.95</b> for two	<b>\$17.99/month</b> for two rentals; <b>\$21.99</b> for three; <b>\$29.99</b> for five; (save <b>\$24</b> with a year commitment)	<b>\$13.95/month</b> for one rental; <b>\$19.95</b> for two; <b>\$29.95</b> for three; <b>\$34.95</b> for four	<b>\$18.95/month</b> for two rentals; <b>\$23.95</b> for three; <b>\$39.95</b> for five (maximum)	<b>\$19.95/month</b> for two rentals; <b>\$24.95</b> for three; <b>\$29.95</b> for four; <b>\$34.95</b> for five; <b>\$39.95</b> for six	<b>\$6</b> each for 7 days; late fee is <b>\$5.99</b> for every week thereafter; 9 games max
	Rent-to-buy option, offering discounted rates on games you'd rather keep for your collection; online game instructions; free 10-day trial membership; new-release reservations; e-mail and 800-number customer-service	Huge selection (5,000+ games, including PS1, Dreamcast, N64, and GBA); cheaper with one-year commitment; reservations for new releases; retro splendor with NES, SNES, and Sega Genesis rentals available soon; e-mail and 800-number customer-service	Free 10-day trial; large handheld rental catalog; new-release reservations; GBA rentals	Trade-in program for website credit; accessory store; stock PS1, Dreamcast, and even some Japanese imports; decent selection of used games; live online, e-mail, or 800-number customer service; easy-to-navigate website; new-release reservations	PS1 games; instructions e-mailed directly to you; tells how many customers are already waiting for each game; new-release reservations; e-mail and 800-number customer-service	Instant gratification; PS1 games; get to hear forced greetings from staff
	Rental tier is limited, with a maximum of just two games at one time	Sloppy website interface; ghetto packaging; no used-game purchase plan	They're either too popular or have too few games—nothing ever showed up in our mailbox, even after two weeks.	Extremely slow shipments	Graphically inept website	Late fees; no instruction booklets; selection can be limited, especially for niche titles; no reservations
	<b>GTA: VICE CITY:</b> 6 days <b>PANZER DRAGON ORTA:</b> 2 days <b>CUBIVORE:</b> 2 days	<b>GTA: VICE CITY:</b> 3 days <b>PANZER DRAGON ORTA:</b> 2 days <b>CUBIVORE:</b> 3 days	<b>GTA: VICE CITY:</b> Never Arrived <b>PANZER DRAGON ORTA:</b> Never Arrived <b>CUBIVORE:</b> Never Arrived	<b>GTA: VICE CITY:</b> 5 days <b>PANZER DRAGON ORTA:</b> Never Arrived <b>CUBIVORE:</b> Never Arrived	<b>GTA: VICE CITY:</b> 2 days <b>PANZER DRAGON ORTA:</b> 4 days <b>CUBIVORE:</b> 2 days	<b>GTA: VICE CITY:</b> 20 min. (19 sprinting to door) <b>PANZER DRAGON ORTA:</b> 20 min. (17 if you double-park) <b>CUBIVORE:</b> Not at local store

While its catalog may lack vintage offerings like Dreamcast and PS1 games, **GameFly** gives customers the all-important "Keep It" option, has an easy-to-steer website with editorial content, mails out games in sturdy packaging, and ships awfully fast. If you're into older games or want to rent more than two at a time, **GameLender** is the way to go.



# GAMING BEAUTY

**A**lthough hardly your typical console owner (after all, she sports a bubbly personality, a cheery demeanor, and breasts), actress and former *Playboy* model Angelica Bridges still finds time for the odd round of *Hot Shots Golf*. Now that her stint on *Baywatch* and *Mortal Kombat Conquest* (the short-lived TV series that ten people in the world watched) have wrapped, you can catch her as the absolute baddest babe in 300's *Street Racing Syndicate*.

**EGM:** Do girls just wanna have fun?  
**Angelica Bridges:** Yeah. We're not into stress or drama.

**EGM:** So why don't more women play the videogames?

**AB:** There's something in our brain that guys don't have. It starts at birth. Our parents raise us like we're porcelain and will break. Piloting spaceships or shooting aliens doesn't translate into the mind-set.

**EGM:** Perhaps you could recommend some titles that'd get a girl in the mood for "Force Feedback"?

**AB:** The bad thing is, most games are competitive. That's not a turn-on. Maybe *Super Mario Sunshine* or *Ms. Pac-Man*—that's a favorite. If a guy sat and played that with me, it'd be a huge aphrodisiac.

**EGM:** And if a gamer cleans up the old pizza boxes and *Zelda* toys? That's like a double-mega-aphrodisiac, right? 'Cause if not, we just wasted five minutes.

**AB:** Oh yeah. Make sure the apartment is nice and tidy, boys. There better not be any sweaty socks, crumbs, or empty beer cans lying around.

**EGM:** Crap, that's a lot of work to do on a regular basis. Couldn't we just pick up a chick in an arcade?

**AB:** Absolutely. If she's there, she automatically has something in common with you. That's the ultimate icebreaker.

**EGM:** Would you date an out-of-the-closet hardcore gamer?

**AB:** Some girls would. Me, I'm afraid I'd never get any attention. Trying to pry you guys off *Metrod Prime* isn't easy.

**EGM:** Strike one. Got any hot trends into the hobby?

**AB:** Not really. As a whole, we're raised to

be girly, not chop heads off *Mortal Kombat*-style. In grade school I might have, but now? Sorry....

**EGM:** So what's currently on your playlist, then?

**AB:** *NHL 2K3* is the top one for sure. You can be a player from any team, start fights, and beat the crap out of guys with the stick.

**EGM:** Biggest drawback to being a "grrl gamer"?

**AB:** I can't come off all sweet and pretty while playing. It's like Tourette's behind the gamepad...I just get frustrated. That reminds me. A hot tip for you guys out there: Always let the girl win. ♀

## Life in the Race Lane

Respect is the name of the game in *Street Racing Syndicate*, the *Gran Turismo*-style racer out this July for PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube. To get that respect, you've got to earn it by winning races, amassing fortune by gambling your cars and cash, and wooing the classy ladies (like Angelica here) who hang out at the raceways. 3DO says that these "girlfriends" are for more than just show; they'll provide you with info on races, cars, and other drivers—and they can also be (guy) added to the prizes when you win.





# SEIZE THE GAME

Four retro wares put the past in your palm



## Mattel Handheld Football

■ Mattel ■ \$15

**What it is:** A reissue of the handheld sports games (baseball and basketball are also available) from the 1980s. You remember: It's all about moving the red LED lights across the field while riding across the country in the family stationwagon.

**Cool factor:** ★★★★★ These games serve up competition in its purest form. The chirpy sounds get annoying after a while, but it's a small price to pay for the ultimate in retro play.

**Dork factor:** ★★ You'll be the envy of every old-school gamer in town.



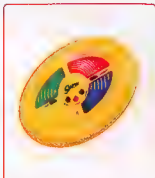
## Atari Classics 10-in-1 TV Games

■ JAKKS ■ \$20

**What it is:** This vintage, battery-powered Atari 2600 controller plugs into the back of any television, letting you play built-in oldies like *Asteroids*, *Breakout*, *Pong*, and more.

**Cool factor:** ★★★★★ Why just BYOB to the party when you can BYOMC (as in *Missile Command*)?

**Dork factor:** ★★★★★ There's a good reason these things used to be called psychicks—that's particularly evident when you're twiddling the rod in your lap. Try not to get too excited while you're playing *Centipede*. Save that for, uh...*Gravitar*.



## Electronic Handheld Simon

■ Hasbro ■ \$13

**What it is:** A slimmed-down version of the ol' *Simon* Says-themed game that was a '70s phenomenon. Players try to mimic the flashing lights in sequence. It's a to-fi answer to *Dance Dance Revolution*.

**Cool factor:** ★★★★★ *Simon*'s claim to fame is that it was among the first electronic handheld games, although this tiny version is unrecognizable compared to the Technicolor frying-pan-sized original.

**Dork factor:** ★★★★★ Good luck impressing the ladies with your *Simon* skills now that those damn videogames have rotted your brain.



## Ms. Pac-Man Color FX II Classic Arcade Game

■ MGA ■ \$15

**What it is:** A Lilliputian version of the pellet-munching classic coin-op. *Pac-Man*, *Missile Command*, and *Centipede* are also available.

**Cool factor:** ★★★★★ Nice idea, poor execution. We doubt these tough-to-see LED graphics would've been state of the art in the Middle Ages.

**Dork factor:** ★★★★★ The Day-Glo see-through plastic isn't exactly macho—we've seen manlier Hello Kitty cellphone covers. Plus, unlike a real arcade machine, this gizmo can't take a kick when you get pissed.

—David Kushner

## CHARTS

TOP 10 BEST-SELLING GAMES OF MARCH 2003

1	The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker	Wii, Nintendo
2	Pokémon Ruby	GBA, Nintendo
3	Pokémon Sapphire	GBA, Nintendo
4	Tomelhu 3: Wrath of Heaven	PS2, Activision
5	The Getaway	PS2, Sony CEA
6	Def Jam Fight for NY	PS2, EA Games
7	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	PS2, Rockstar
8	Kameo: The Demonic Possession	PS2, Namco
9	Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses	PS2, Konami
10	MVP Baseball 2003	PS2, EA Sports

TOP 10 GAME RENTALS FOR THE WEEK ENDING 4/20/03

1	The Getaway	PS2, Sony CEA
2	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	PS2, Ubi Soft
3	Def Jam Fight for NY	PS2, EA Games
4	X2: Wolverine's Revenge	PS2, Activision
5	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	PS2, Rockstar
6	Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses	PS2, Konami
7	All-Star Baseball 2004	PS2, Acclaim Sports
8	The Getaway	PS2, Sony CEA
9	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	PS2, Infogrames
10	X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Xbox, Activision

## L'I' PREVIEWS: UPDATES ON UPCOMING GAMES

■ PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube

### THE HOBBIT: THE PRELUDE TO THE LORD OF THE RINGS

■ Release Date: September 2003

How did Bilbo Baggins get the One Ring to begin with? It wasn't a raffle. Sierra's action-RPG *The Hobbit* tells the whole bloody tale while cashing in on the *Lord of the Rings* license in the process.



■ Xbox

### OUTLAW VOLLEY SPIKE OR DIE

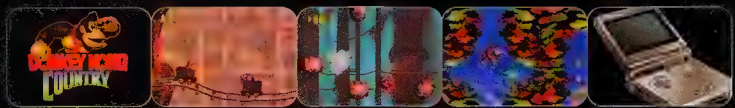
■ Release Date: June 2003

You won't find any pantwaist sweatshirt collecting items in an Xbox Live-enabled volleyball game where you get to beat up opposing players if they block your spike. *Outlaw Volley* is full of tiny swimsuits on the female players.





Only in Donkey Kong Country.



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# WHERE'S THE PARTY?

PS2 gamers just say no to EverCrack—so far

**A**sk any PC gamer about *EverQuest* and you'll likely hear sordid tales about how they've played it for four days straight with no sleep. It's a phenomenon that's broken sales records, won awards, and spawned multiple expansion packs, support groups, and even real-life romances. It seemed a safe bet, then, that when *EverQuest Online Adventures* hit PlayStation 2 last February, the console's 50-million-plus owners worldwide would help repeat its PC success.

That hasn't happened—at least, not yet—



■ So what if *EQOA*'s so-bad-it's-good TV ad has become the butt of many a message board denizen's joke? "I'm so proud of the game itself," says *EQOA* Producer Ben Bell. "I'm just so excited that there's an ad."

though it isn't for lack of trying. The game received heavy play in print, TV, and in-store ad campaigns. But its debut was more lamb than lion. "I think [Sony] thought it was going to blow the doors off the place," says a head buyer for a large retail chain, who asked to remain anonymous. "Up to now, we've sold a respectable number, but [Sony] was expecting to sell that many in the first or second week—not the first three months."

After that quiet start, Sony took drastic steps to bolster lagging sales of *EverQuest*: It bundled the title with the PS2 Network Adaptor—free of charge—in hopes of getting those new to online gaming to give the game a shot (and then pay the monthly \$10 basic subscription fee to keep playing). Also, less than two months after its initial release, *EQOA*'s standalone retail price was reduced from \$39.99 to the value price of \$19.99. Despite these deals, *EQOA* still hasn't been able to break into the list of top 20 best-selling PS2 games. In fact, in its first month, it ranked 32nd on the PS2 sales chart and 46th overall.

But, unlike many games that don't live up to expectations and fade quietly into oblivion, *EQOA* isn't going anywhere—Sony Online Entertainment has no plans to abandon the project. "We're really happy with the way the product has been received," says Ben Bell, producer for *EQOA*. Bell points out that ongoing updates to the game—the trade skill system that allows players to craft unique items, in-world auctions, and other added features—will only improve the experience and lure in more subscribers.

And subscribers are what *EQOA*'s busi-



■ One of the many "who's got the biggest sword" contests you may see going on online.

ness model is about. Sony doesn't worry over the fact that the game is now selling at a discounted rate. "That's really not a sign of failure on our part," Bell says. "A big part of our business is game subscriptions...we're really

gaming is now a fact of life," says Bell. "It's only going to grow in popularity."

If you're still hung up on the graphics and gameplay issues that many fault the game for (*EGM*'s review scores ranged from 5.0 to

**"We're really happy with the way the product has been received."**

—*EQOA* Producer Ben Bell

interested in getting the game out there and also promoting the Network Adaptors."

Bell—and Sony—may have a point. Though the original PC *EverQuest* experienced more explosive growth, that's partly because most home computers were already equipped with Internet connectors. "Online console

7.5), Bell says you won't have much to complain about for long. "The total game experience is bigger than the graphics," he says, "[but in] anything that this team does in the future, you're going to see a great improvement in that department."

—Jennifer Tsao

## expanding your horizons, literally

Horarth (*EQOA*'s persistent world) gets bigger this October when the first expansion pack, *EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers*, comes out. Besides increasing the world's size to 500 virtual square miles (from its current size of around 300), the game will include enhanced character models and armor; a new playable race (Ogres); new items, spells, and enemies to battle; streaming in-game music; and a heightened level cap (now you can get up to level 60). It looks like Sony may also address some complaints: A tutorial, controller

instructions, improved communication and travel options, and in-game customer service are planned (see are, we hope, new TV ads).





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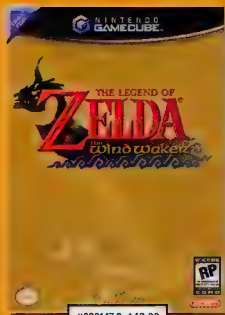


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# ORIGINAL GANGSTER

We have a bad guy play bad-guy games. And he steals our GameCube

**Y**ou know that movie *Goodfellas*? Yeah, you do. It's based on the life of this guy right here, Henry Hill. He worked for the Mob, took part in the \$6 million Lufthansa heist in '78 (the biggest ever at the time), then turned state's evidence and helped put away the Lucchese crime family. We thought the guy who lived *Grand Theft Auto* back in the '60s and '70s should play it, so we called for a sit-down and brought in *GTA: Vice City*, *Hillman 2*, *The Getaway*, and, for the hell of it, *Animal Crossing*. Along for the meeting: Julian, Hill's 14-year-old son and videogame consigliere.







■ PlayStation 2  
**GRAND THEFT AUTO:  
VICE CITY**

**EGM:** Here's the opening sequence.

**Henry HH:** Very good. Very funny.

**EGM:** Here's the crooked lawyer.

**HH:** Been there, done that. [laughs]

**EGM:** OK, now press Triangle, jump in that car.

**HH:** I want that Lincoln! Where the—where'd he go?

**Julian HH:** Press Triangle!

**HH:** I am. Everyone's watching me f\*\*\* this up here! I never played one of these....

**JH:** You're not supposed to hit everything, Henry. You're supposed to avoid it. You're driving like in real life.

**EGM:** You're gonna get a DWI, Henry. Go up to that guy. Now hit him.

**HH:** Julian, help! I feel like such a retard! My brain doesn't fire the way these kids' brains do.

**JH:** Follow the map. The pink dot. Follow the pink dot.

**HH:** What pink...oh, that thing. First of all, that's purple.

**JH:** Whatever, just follow—

**HH:** Show me where the money is. I'll get the money. Oh, I'm in South Beach!

**JH:** They got money, Henry. Hit 'em! Go up and punch 'em!

**HH:** Wait, the girl on the roller skates, I want her! Where'd she go?

**JH:** Don't worry about that—hit the guy. Use the gun! Press Circle. [Henry shoots some Vice City denizens before the cops arrive and make the collar.]

**JH:** Bustled!

**HH:** Yeah? You just lost your college fund, Julian.



■ PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube  
**HITMAN 2:  
SILENT ASSASSIN**

**HH:** What's this? Italy? Yeah, I'm half Sicilian. That's where I learned to cook, from my mother. The other half's Irish.

**JH:** That's where I learned to drink.

**JH:** You're not supposed to drink.

**EGM:** OK, we're in Sicily. Your character's a gardener. And a hit man.

**HH:** I like that. I want those tomatoes.

**EGM:** Been to Sicily much?

**HH:** I was over there a bunch of times.

**JH:** I had to testify. What kinda hit man is this? Wait, he's going to confession?

**JH:** This is supposed to be fun?

**EGM:** He's got a conscience.

**HH:** These Sicilian hit men have no conscience. Dime a f\*\*\*ing dozen. I'm telling you. We called 'em zips. They zip in, they zip out. So I'm supposed to what, here?

**JH:** Go in the gate. Now hit that guard.

**EGM:** I think that's the mailman.

**JH:** Hit the mailman!

**HH:** The milkman? They're trying!

**JH:** Henry, you're not—

**HH:** I'm running all over the place.

**JH:** Screw this. Only reason I go to Sicily is to get tomatoes.



■ PlayStation 2  
**THE GETAWAY**

**HH:** What's this, English gangsters?

**What the f\*\*\* are they saying? And why's that guy so ugly? Like his face got caught in the sausage machine.**

**EGM:** OK, that aside, how do you like it so far?

**HH:** This is like that other stupid one—I'm dying all over again. How do you drive? Ah, s\*\*\*, wrong side of the street! Bad enough I gotta learn this complicated apparatus—

**JH:** It's a torture device. Look at these f\*\*\*ing buttons—where am I going?

**HH:** It's a torture device. Look at these f\*\*\*ing buttons—where am I going?

**What the f\*\*\*? We're in Brooklyn!**

**JH:** It's London.

**HH:** I know. Let's kill some guys. Can I kill a cop? The Queen, is she dead? Somebody....

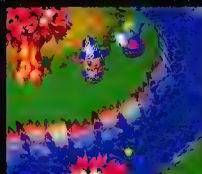
**JH:** You have to follow the mission.

**HH:** There's too much traffic. This is like the freeway—why would I wanna do that at home?

**JH:** Finish the mission!

**HH:** Julian, I can't even get in this car. How am I gonna finish anything, here?

**This game sucks. I'm gonna go have a smoke break.**



■ GameCube  
**ANIMAL CROSSING**

**HH:** What kind of...what sex are these things? What is this, X-rated? Oooh!

**Good cat! Where is this? This is up in Pennsylvania, right? Look! I'm fishing!**

**JH:** Hey, there's a fish! Head the other way!

**HH:** No, it's coming down here.

**Current's running this way. It's swimming upstream. Probably spawning.**

**They get pregnant; they run away. Wish they all did that. Ah, I don't wanna catch a pregnant fish. But I do want this game!**

**JH:** We can rent it, Dad.

**HH:** I'm not renting this! I'd be too ashamed...Jemine talk to this walrus, here. Ah, f\*\*\* it. I like this music. Nice.

**JH:** This game's for little girls.

**HH:** I will master this frickin' game! I gotta take this home.

**JH:** Henry, it belongs to EGM.

**HH:** Bill me for it. Call San Francisco [EGM's home office]. I want this.

**JH:** It's for little girls, Dad!

**HH:** Girls, boys, whatever. Hey, I never had a childhood. Growing up with Paulie [former mob boss Paul Varlo], you don't have a childhood. My childhood was taking a Molotov and throwing it through a window.

**JH:** You played games, Dad.

**HH:** If it didn't have dice, cards, or pistols, I never played it.

**EGM:** So you'd never played a videogame before today?

**HH:** The only one I played was Bong.

**EGM:** Uh...Bong?

**HH:** Bong, yeah.

**JH:** It's Bong, not Bong.

**HH:** This animal thing here, this is the longest I've ever been attached to a game. Julian, I could play this with your mother. Give us something in common. Besides sex.

**JH:** Oh, God. Can we go now? *✶*

—Alex Porter



What's this, English gangsters? What the f\*\*\* are they saying?

—Alex Porter





No, it's not the world's lamest robot parade—the red mech stole the flag in *MechAssault's* downloadable CTF mode.

# ONLINE THIS MONTH

Squeeze more assault out of your mech



Get your mech-piloting suit back on—Microsoft has just added a second batch of Xbox Live downloadable extras for *MechAssault* that will make destroying your friends even more enjoyable.

The biggest addition is a Capture the Flag (CTF) mode, plus two new maps—Desert Storm and Midtown Mayhem—to try it in. If you've played a first-person shooter online in the last two years, you already know how CTF works: Two teams, two bases, two flags; storm the opposing team's headquarters, steal their flag, bring it back to yours, repeat. But that's not all. Two new

mechs, Loki and Hellbringer, are also newly available. These similar-looking behemoths have slightly different characteristics (the 'bringer jumps, Loki doesn't) and weapons (Hellbringer packs a flamer, autocannon, and Javelin long-range missile battery; Loki has a pulse laser, autocannon, and Crossbow short-range missiles). Let the robot-on-robot carnage commence.

## On egmmag.com

Log on to our website and keep up with the Belmonts via full interviews with the *Castlevania* team and an extensive history of the series.

What, you want more? OK, you can also read all the extra stuff from our Henry Hill interview we couldn't fit into the print version on page 56. Extended online remix! And if you're really, really hardcore into *The Sims*, check out our uncult Afterthoughts Plus, we've got interviews for ya with the designers of *Legacy of Kain: Defiance* (PS2, Xbox), *SSX 3* (PS2, Xbox, GC), and *Counter Strike* (Xbox).

## PC GAMING UPDATE

The big news happening on that "other" platform



*Grand Theft Auto III: Vice City* is finally coming to PC, and guess what! It's pretty much the exact same game you've been playing the last bajillion months or so! Oh, yeah, it'll have sharper graphics and mouse control, and it will let you play your own MP3s (finally! A place for your entire *Glass Tiger* collection!). It'll be big on PC, just like it is on PS2, but you know what, who really cares? Yawn, shrug, la-di-dah, this is 2000 not the big news for the PC.

No, the big deal is that *Half-Life 2* will be out by Christmas. The sequel to the biggest PC game of the last five-plus years, *Half-Life 2* looks even better than the first game, with a state-of-the-art engine that trumps the more ballyhooed *Doom III* code and features killer artificial intelligence and character animation. Barring a catastrophe, this will be the best game of the year on PC and exactly the sort of game—a first-person shooter—that the PC does better than any console. Yes, the overly praised *Halo* will join *Vice City* in finally jumping to PC this year—sharper graphics, mouse control, yadda yadda—but *Half-Life 2* is going to be the Lord King God of PC gaming for this year and the next.

—Robert Coffey  
Computer Gaming World

## must-hit websites



**www.klev.com** — Looking for the name of that one arcade game you used to play? Maybe the one where you bumped cars off the road and jumped really high over water? And all you remember is it started with "B"? Go to the Killer List of Videogames (KLOV) and look it up. Ah—here it is, *Bump 'N' Jump*.



**www.gamesfaq.com** — If you're stuck in a game and don't know where to turn, point your browser to this handy site. Here, you'll find gamer-created walkthroughs and tips for the latest games, plus hardcore message boards for any other questions (say, how to get the Venus suit in *DOA Volleyball*).



**www.gamerankings.com** — Looking for an opinion on a game? Surf on over to Game Rankings, a depository of review scores from websites and magazines for thousands of titles with links to the full text (if available). Definitely a handy resource if you wanna know which *Castlevania* is the best.



PC gamers will come running for the great taste of *Half-Life 2*.





# RESIDENT EVIL DEAD+AIM

Face your graveside fears in an all-new, nightmarish first-person action-shooter adventure for your PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system. Encounter a new level of horror as you battle flesh devouring zombies and murderous mutants to regain control of a sea-lacked cruise ship lost in the Atlantic.



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PlayStation 2



**GUNCON2**

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# THE RUMOR MILL

Gossip that walks 'n' talks

## q-männ



### GAME ON

Welcome friends, your mascot of gaming's hottest gossip has returned to conduct his monthly symphony of scuttlebutt. This installment's rondo is especially tender and finely aged, its flavor emerging like a just-hatched butterfly from its cocoon...or something. Let's get it on! And if you feel like dropping me a line, send it to [quartermann@ziffdavis.com](mailto:quartermann@ziffdavis.com). See you in another 30... —The Q



Samurai Hyakkimaru and pal from Dororo

### Sega's "Halo Killer"

I know, I know—the words "Halo" and "killer" have appeared together so many times they've lost all meaning. And I really didn't want to use them here...but what the hey, too late now. Sega's working on (if The Q's spies are to be believed) an awesome first-person shooter so top-secret it won't be revealed at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). I wish I could say more, but....

### Sony enters the engine business

When the PS3 hits, Sony wants developers to be ready for future shock. To help them cope, the company will offer a huge amount of middleware code—like a generic driving game engine, a first-person-shooter engine, etc.—developed by its own studios. Jak & Daxter creator Naughty Dog is doing the honors on the platformer engine, using the bits and pieces it has from its secret PS3 platformer already in development. If lots of games are running on the same underpinnings, though, might they start to look and feel a bit similar?

### Dororo set to Wow

If you claim to be an anime or manga fan, then you know that Otsu Tezuka (aka the "god of comics") is the Japanese equivalent of Walt Disney, thanks in part to Astro Boy, his excellent series of graphic novels. Well, Sega's Wow Entertainment is doing a game based on one of Tezuka's other classic titles—Dororo (try saying that one five times fast). This 3D actioner follows samurai Hyakkimaru as he hacks and slashes through hordes of monsters, while on a search for his, er, stolen body parts.



### Web-slinger for hire

The Q's spies hear that the next Spider-Man title from Activision will take a cue from the free-roaming gameplay of Grand Theft Auto and allow you to wander the crime-ridden streets, going wherever your web-slinging takes you. Tinging yet?

### Merger talk part XXVI

How about we just say in five years there'll be one software publisher and leave it at that, eh? No? Ah well...the most recent rumors of consolidation (depending on who you believe) have Namco and Sega merging, or Microsoft buying Sega, or EA buying Sega, or everyone buying everyone. Stop the train, I wanna get off....

### New Pilotwings

Speculation abounds that a new installment of Nintendo's arcade-style flight simulator Pilotwings is coming to the Cube. Word has it the as-of-yet-unnamed developer is Star Wars Rogue Squadron maker Factor 5, though by the time you read this, the cat may already be outta the bag. Hey, don't yell at me, my fingers are flyin' on this column weeks before E3 goes down in the City of Angels. Would someone please hurry up and invent a telepathy machine already?

## NEWS BITS



■ **Evil movie sequel**—A sequel to the *Resident Evil* movie begins filming this fall. It couldn't possibly be as bad as the first one, could it?

■ **Chinese PS2 release pushed back**—Gamers in China will have to wait till later this year to get their hands on an official Chinese PS2, as the government there is unsure whether to classify it as an entertainment device or high technology.

■ **Sony combines PS2 chips**—In a move to save on production costs, Sony has found a way to combine the two main chips inside every PS2—the Emotion Engine and Graphics Synthesizer—into one.

## SEPARATED AT BIRTH



■ **Hitman 2's silent assassin**, known only as Agent 47



■ **Democratic spokesman James Carville**, aka the "Ragin' Cajun"

## bits of q



■ **SNK Back in the Saddle**  
Hallelujah! SNK, purveyors of arcade fighting games aplenty, has returned to the U.S. after three years in the wilderness. It has a new Stateside subsidiary all set to release titles like *Metal Slug Advance* and *The King of Fighters 2001* later this year. Dare we dream of a new *Card Fighter's Clash*?



■ **Pokémon Lite**  
*Pokémon Box Ruby/Sapphire* isn't a real *Pokémon* game for GameCube, but it's as close as you'll get right now. *Box* is actually just a glorified Pokédex, allowing you to store your monsters on a GameCube memory card and check out their stats. It's out in Japan now; expect U.S. release info soon.



■ **Lupin Steals PS2 Spotlight**  
If you got hooked on *Lupin the Third* during its run on Cartoon Network's *Adult Swim*, you'll no doubt be happy to hear there's more of the suave thief coming your way—in game form. This fall, you'll be able to sneak, steal, and ogle gal-pal Fujiko on PlayStation 2, courtesy of Bandal.



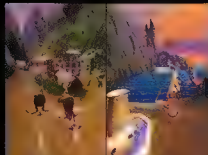
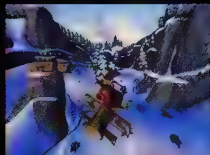
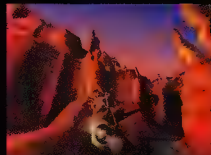
**MIDWAY**



# IT'S TIME TO GET YOUR FREAK ON

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PlayStation 2



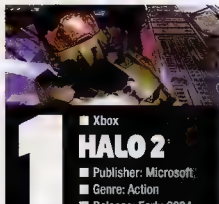
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# THE HOT FIVE

Where your votes tell us what to write about

Vote for your most-anticipated games each month between the 1st and the 15th at [www.egmmag.com](http://www.egmmag.com).



**1**

- Xbox
- HALO 2**
- Publisher: Microsoft
- Genre: Action
- Release: Early 2004

While you wait for *H2*, you need to see Red vs. Blue's *Blood Gulch Chronicles* ([www.redvsblue.com](http://www.redvsblue.com)), a series of witty *Halo*-themed parodies set during a supposed post-*Halo* civil war.

An excerpt from Episode 3, The Rookies: "You know what? Forget what I said before. We can definitely pick up chicks in this [tank]. Probably two or three chicks apiece." "What are you going to do with two chicks?" "Women are like *Voltron*. The more you can hook up, the better it gets."



**2**

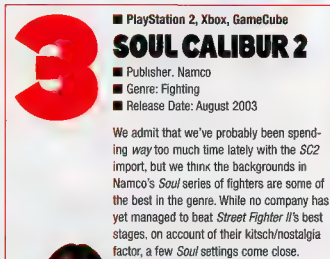
- GameCube
- FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES**
- Publisher: Nintendo
- Genre: RPG
- Release Date: Winter 2004

Big, bad news since last month: *Crystal* has been delayed (now spring, no summer in Japan, fall to winter in America), and the entire battle system is being reworked. A highly anticipated GameCube game delayed at the last minute? You would have guessed? Another potential buzzkill! The guy behind Square's supremely un-fun *Unlimited Saga* is overseeing *Crystal*. We're going to bring up opposition... *SOUL* is better! *Soul* and *Final Fantasy* are better!





■ *Crystal* has four-player simultaneous play



**3**

- PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube
- SOUL CALIBUR 2**
- Publisher: Namco
- Genre: Fighting
- Release Date: August 2003

We admit that we've probably been spending way too much time lately with the *SC2* import, but we think the backgrounds in Namco's *Soul* series of fighters are some of the best in the genre. While no company has yet managed to beat *Street Fighter II*'s best stages, on account of their kitsch/nostalgia factor, a few *Soul* settings come close.



■ Real-life

**THE THAI/CAMBODIA STAGE:** Based on Thailand's Grand Palace (pictured), and Cambodia's Angkor Wat temple appears elsewhere in the background. Even better than *SF2*'s workmanlike Thailand stages.



■ In-game

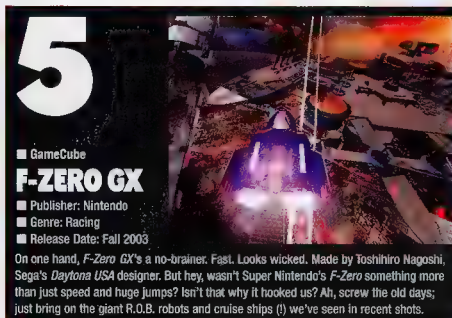
**THE JAPANESE PALACE STAGE:** In the original *Soul Calibur*, Namco based Mitsurugi's stage on the real Takamatsu Castle, a water castle in Japan. It's not Ryu's, but it is damn cool.



**4**

- PlayStation 2
- FINAL FANTASY X-2**
- Publisher: Square Enix
- Genre: RPG
- Release Date: November 2003

We know you want it. We want it. *Geography* wants it. Just remember: Square's upcoming *RPG*—the first-ever direct sequel—is kinda like *Final Fantasy X* with the tongue-in-cheek feel of the *Charlie's Angels* movie. And its effects are already visible in the cosplay community—at a recent parade in San Francisco, we spotted two different, rather rotund gals dressed as the hot-pants-clad Yuna from this second-pp sequel. Phwoaar.



**5**

- GameCube
- F-ZERO GX**
- Publisher: Nintendo
- Genre: Racing
- Release Date: Fall 2003

On one hand, *F-Zero GX*'s a no-brainer. Fast. Looks wicked. Made by Yoshihiro Nagoshi, Sega's *Daytona USA* designer. But hey, wasn't Super Nintendo's *F-Zero* something more than just speed and huge jumps? Isn't that why it hooked us? Ah, screw the old days; just bring on the giant R.O.B. robots and cruise ships (!) we've seen in recent shots.





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# COMING SOON

Want to know what games are on the way? (Just nod your head)



## JUNE

**Aliens vs. Predator: Extinction**  
(Strategy) PS2, Xbox

After this, a Freddy vs. Jason online RPG would only be a slight surprise

**Dragon Ball Z: Legacy of Goku II**  
(RPG) GBA

Super Saiyans seem more like UPS delivery guys in this DBZ fetch-quest

**Donkey Kong Country** (Action) GBA  
DK was once king of the consoles, but you won't go ape over his handheld comeback

**Freestyle Metal X** (Sports) Xbox, GC  
Dave Mirra with a motor—and Motörhead—in three ass-crack-ugly covers

**GI Jockey 3** (Racing) PS2  
With 6,000 horses and adjustable mouth bits, it's *Gran Turismo* for country clubbers

**The Italian Job** (Racing) PS2, Xbox, GC  
"The game definitely embodies the spirit of the movie," says F. Gary Gray, the director of this summer's high-octane heist flick



**Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter** (Action) PS2, Xbox, GC

First-person shootouts and space dogfights are a stellar idea, but it's running so late

**Midnight Club II** (Racing) Xbox  
The Xbox version of Rockstar's street racer gets better visuals and voice-chat support

**Midtown Madness 3** (Racing) Xbox  
Start as a delivery driver protecting precious cargo and rise to the rank of special agent

**Outlaw Volleyball** (Sports) Xbox  
Guaranteed to out-slit Tecmo's *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball*

**P.M.O.3** (Action) GC  
Heroine Vanessa Schneider dispatches enemies with a high-caliber dance routine

**The Pirates of the Caribbean** (Action) Xbox, GBA  
Disney's dousing its animatronic marauders in WD-40 for movie and console comebacks

**Resident Evil: Dead Aim** (Action) PS2  
Swab the decks of a zombie-filled ship with lead in this light-gun shooter

**Rally Championship** (Racing) GC  
Compete in six international off-road rallies

**Rock N' Roll Racing** (Racing) GBA  
Ozzy would love this remake of the auto-combat classic, if he could turn on a GBA

**Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix** (Action) Xbox  
Featuring hit-specific damage, this sadist's shooter promises unsurpassed gore

**Sonic Pinball Party** (Pinball) GBA  
Use flippers to knock Sonic against flashing bumpers and through corkscrewing ramps

**Starsky & Hutch** (Action) PS2, Xbox  
With a driving wheel and a light gun, you and a friend will look like dorks playing this

**Street Racing Syndicate** (Racing) PS2, Xbox, GC  
Use your girlfriend as collateral in this extra-sexy take on underground motorsports

**Unlimited Saga** (RPG) PS2  
Square's latest RPG is definitely different. It's just that it's different in a lot of bad ways

**Wakeboarding Unleashed Featuring Shaun Murray** (Sports) PS2, Xbox  
Activision applies the tried-and-true *Tony Hawk* formula to another pseudo-sport

**Wario World** (Action) GC  
Mario's opportunistic alter ego butt-stomps and bull-rushes baddies to retrieve his loot

## JULY

**Ape Escape 2** (Platform) PS2  
Like the novel original, with more gizmos

**Are the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits** (RPG) PS2  
The latest *Arc* boasts a bigger story, better graphics, and beefier turn-based battles

**Armored Core 3: Silent Line** (Action) PS2  
Agelec insists on retrofitting its mech combat fleet one colossal bolt at a time

**Chaos Legion** (Action) PS2  
Burgeoning death-metal-band name or sharp action/adventure game? You decide

**Dinosauria** (Action) Xbox, GC  
This prehistoric paradise where man and dino live peacefully is in trouble. Big trouble

**Downhill Domination** (Racing) PS2  
How developer Inoq went from *Twisted Metal* to downhill racing is beyond us

**Warship Gunner** (Simulation) PS2  
We now have a good reason for yelling, "You've sunk my battleship!" in the office

**Freaky Flyers** (Racing) PS2, Xbox, GC  
Look, up in the sky! It's a...kart-racing game from Midway

**Ice Nine** (Action) PS2  
This stealth-based first-person shooter is so secret it's not even listed on Bam's website

**K-1 World Grand Prix** (Action) PS2  
Bouts in this squared circle involve more than just fisticuffs—there's kickin', too

**Mario Golf** (Sports) GC  
Fore! It's a-him, Mario. Come join his friends and enemies for a round or two on the links

**Red Dead Revolver** (Action) PS2  
Hopefully, this old west action/adventure will meet its summer release date

**Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII** (Strategy) PS2  
Play as up to eight different characters in your quest to unify China. How edutainment!

**Shrek: Reekin' Havoc** (Action) GBA  
Anything that has the word "reekin'" in its name is bound to stink, right?

**Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic** (RPG) Xbox  
We're guessing that most EGM readers will lean toward the Dark Side of the Force in our number-one most-wanted game of this summer (see page 76)

**Tetris Online** (Puzzle) Xbox  
Want details? It's Tetris...online

**Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Island Thunder** (Action) Xbox  
Unlike the PC version, you can't need the original *Ghost Recon* to enjoy this add-on

**Warship Gunner** (Simulation) PS2  
We now have a good reason for yelling, "You've sunk my battleship!" in the office







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EVERYONE  
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CONTENT RATED BY  
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Online! It's all online with Xbox Live. Face off against other like-minded opponents and talk all the trash your pretty little head can think of. Just remember, there's no right way to get there, as long as you get there first.

**MIDTOWN MADNESS 3**

[www.xbox.com/midtownmadness3](http://www.xbox.com/midtownmadness3)

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XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED



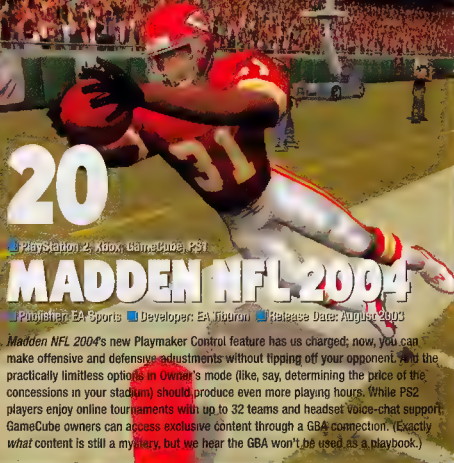


# THE 20 HOTTEST GAMES OF THE SUMMER

We delved through this summer's release calendar and voted for the games that shine the brightest. Now find out which games *EGM*'s editors are most excited to play during this year's hottest months instead of...shiver!...going outside







20

PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube, PS1

## MADDEN NFL 2004

Publisher: EA Sports ■ Developer: EA Tiburon ■ Release Date: August 2003

Madden NFL 2004's new Playmaker Control feature has us charged; now, you can make offensive and defensive adjustments without tipping off your opponent. And the practically limitless options in Owner's mode (like, say, determining the price of the concessions in your stadium) should produce even more playing hours. While PS2 players enjoy online tournaments with up to 32 teams and headset voice-chat support, GameCube owners can access exclusive content through a GBA connection. (Exactly what content is still a mystery, but we hear the GBA won't be used as a playbook.)



18

PlayStation 2, Xbox

## ALTER ECHO

Developer: August 2003

It looks like *somebody* has been getting into the hallucinogens over at Outrage Entertainment, but we figure we'll see how this 3D action-adventure game pans out before staging an intervention. Though *Alter Echo's* trippy art style is an immediate attention-grabber, the character-morphing gameplay and time-stopping (literally) combos could end up causing the most commotion. You play as Nevin, a shapeshifter capable of assuming three forms that range from a hulking gun-wielding behemoth to a wall-climbing four-legged creature specializing in stealth kills and general sneaky. The Time Dilation combo system further shakes up traditional action conventions, incorporating music-and-rhythm-game aspects into combat. Expect the unexpected from this one.



PlayStation 2, Xbox

## BACKYARD WRESTLING: DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

Publisher: Eidos ■ Developer: Paradox ■ Release Date: August 2003

In a thousand years, anthropologists may dig up copies of *Backyard Wrestling*, see its Insane Clown-on-Insane Clown violence (courtesy of celeb thugs Insane Clown Posse), and know exactly when 21st-century civilization fell apart. But for those of us living in the here and now, it feels like the perfect time for this cheap blue-collar brawler. "Throwing thumbtacks at someone is just fun," says Kevin Gill, *Backyard's* lead designer, describing one of a hundred ways you can turn up the hurt. Arenas are multileveled and crammed with hazards. "When an opponent follows me up a ladder in the slaughterhouse," Gill says, "I can bash him over the head with the coffee machine, then throw him through the window of the upstairs office and watch the office worker whale on him with a clipboard." Sweet, sweet catharsis.



Xbox

## SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II: DOUBLE HELIX

Publisher: Activision ■ Developer: Raven ■ Release Date: June 2003

The Shop, a private antiterrorism organization, is paying good money to whoever can put the kibosh on some lunatics wielding biological weapons. Mercenary John Mullins takes the job, lugging his dozen-plus guns to Prague, Colombia, Hong Kong, and beyond in this realistic first-person shooter. Solid voice acting (in multiple languages, no less) gives this adventure the feel of an international spy thriller, and online play via Xbox Live simply sweetens the deal.

17





■ Xbox

## 16 MIDTOWN MADNESS 3

■ Publisher: Microsoft ■ Developer: Digital Illusions ■ Release Date: June 2003

You're a pizza delivery boy, and if you don't get a pie to a group of foreign dignitaries in the next two minutes, it comes out of your paycheck. You never cared much for traffic laws anyway, did you? In Microsoft's first non-PC *Midtown Madness* game, you get behind the wheel and speed around Paris and Washington, D.C. in a variety of Career mode missions (pizza delivery boy, limo driver, paramedic, etc.) and street races in your quest to become the ultimate king of the road. And you can hop online and race against your friends on Xbox Live.

■ Xbox

## TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER

■ Publisher: Ubi Soft ■ Developer: Red Storm

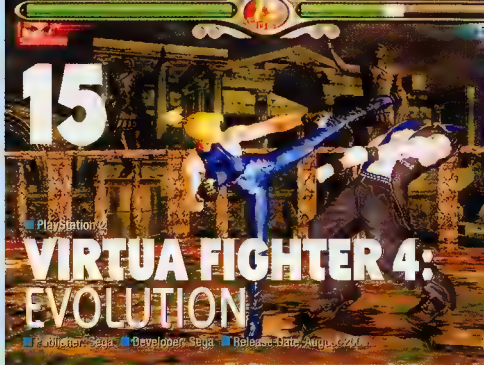
■ Release Date: July 2003

Leave behind Eastern Europe's dreary skies and head for warmer climes. Don't get the wrong idea—there'll be no R&R, just more S&D (that's "search and destroy," greenhorn). You're headed to post-Castro Cuba, which needs a little help to eliminate its lingering warlords and build a viable democracy.

Unlike the PC expansion pack, this *Island Thunder* is a standalone game sold at a reduced price (\$39.99). It includes eight single-player missions, plus four maps each from the original *Ghost Recon* and the *Desert Siege* PC expansion. Play online in a dozen different multiplayer modes, complete with voice communication—crucial for squad coordination in this realistic military sim. But you knew that.



■ With Castro out of Cuba, you'll be smoking Havana's finest in no time.



Ever since Capcom opened the not-quite-a-sequel floodgates with *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition*, fighting-game fans have suffered under the yoke of never-ending updates that offer little more than minor tweaks. *Evolution* bucks the trend by giving gamers a substantial bang for minimal bucks.

First off, you'll find two new characters here—Goh, a vaguely vampiric-looking judo master, and Brad Burns, a slick Italian kickboxer with mad dodging skills. They're both excellent additions to the roster and offer even seasoned players new challenges. The other big addition is the Quest mode, a wildly deep single-player experience that pits you against A.I. versions of Japan's greatest *VF4* players. Other improvements include faster loading times, cleaner graphics, tweaked stages, and tons of silly accessories to customize your fighters with. All for the low, low price of \$20.



■ Below: Goh's chest tattoo reads: "Pick up milk and eggs. Stop by tanning salon. Practice katas. Kill Akira."



## 13 MIDNIGHT CLUB II

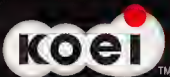
■ PlayStation 2, Xbox

■ Publisher: Rockstar ■ Developer: Rockstar ■ Release Date: June 2003

Xbox Live players have been sorely missing an online arcade-style racer, but they'll soon have one of the best with *Midnight Club II*. Sharper visuals aside, the main advantage this version has over its PlayStation 2 counterpart is chat support—a big deal if trash talking is an integral part of your game plan. The battle for street cred begins in earnest this summer.







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12

GameCube

# WARIO WORLD

Publisher: Nintendo Developer: Treasure  
Release Date: June 2003

Nintendo has been oddly quiet about *Wario World*. But now that we've finally gotten to play it ourselves (see Review Crew this issue for the whole story), we're happy to report that developer Treasure (*Karuga*, *Mischief Makers*) managed to capture the tight platforming and offbeat essence of the Game Boy's *Wario Land* series, while injecting its own patented flavor of crazy. Want proof? Four words: killer clown cream pies.



He's not a bad man, just ambitious.



PlayStation 2

# CHAOS LEGION

Publisher: Capcom Developer: Capcom Release Date: July 2003

Capcom combines the genres it's best known for—action, fighting, and role-playing—in *Chaos Legion*, a darker take on *Dynasty Warriors*' screen-filling melees. Inspired by a Japanese novel, *Chaos Legion* begins as standard slasher fare but hooks you with great revisionist fantasy-character designs, experience points, and computer-controlled "legions" to command. What? *Devil May Cry* wasn't eerie enough for you?

11

GameCube

# MARIO GOLF: TOADSTOOL TOUR

Publisher: Nintendo Developer: Camelot  
Release Date: Fall 2003


10

It may look like a kids game, what with all the cartoon backgrounds, crazy effects, and club-wielding turtles, but Mario actually plays one mean game of golf. Expect a version of the sport with enough nuances for links fans (including weather effects, wind speed, and ball spin), but also easier controls and the friendly Mario coat of paint for casual players, plus link-up support for a forthcoming GBA *Mario Golf*.



gower as Mario attempts to drive the ball past a Koopa-Chomp.



PlayStation 2, Xbox

# WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED

Publisher: Activision 02 Developer: Shaba Release Date: June 2003

It has been years since *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* reinvented radical—now X-games of every niche, from Razor scootin' to erotic bikin', have nabbed a piece of the action-sports pie. So you can imagine our surprise when a sport as marginal as mock surfing made a splash around the office.

How'd *Wakeboarding Unleashed* featuring Shaun Murray make this list? Genius catch-and-release rope mechanics developed in lockstep with levels that maximize use of the maneuver, mainly. Apply *THPS*'s infallible stunt system to a wealth of multiplayer modes and minichallenges, and you've got cause to care about action sports again.

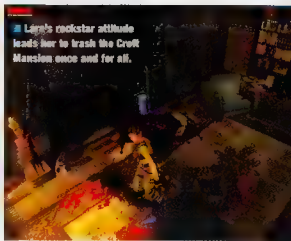
9

PlayStation 2

# TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS

Publisher: Eidos Developer: Core  
Release Date: June 2003 (We'll believe it when we see it.)

If "well-known" meant "beloved," Lara Croft would be higher on this list, but too many *Tomb Raider* reshakes have left us skeptical. What could make this one different? *Angel of Darkness* features plenty of (ahem) curved surfaces, stealth sequences, bodypart power-ups, new moves, and multiple characters—in addition to the series' standard run/jump/climb gameplay. We'll live with the French backdrops. But we're spooked by delays and still wonder how Lara will feel...er, controlwise, of course.



8

"Koopa, I want you to kill all the gophers on the golf course."





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PlayStation 2

## SILENT HILL 3

Publisher: Konami  
Developer: Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo  
Release Date: August 2003



Where other frightfests settle for mere scares, *Silent Hill*'s hard-edged horror would rather scar your mind. Indeed, if the second *Hill* adventure is on par with a Trent Reznor video, the third's like touring a diseased organ on the tip of an endoscope. (When you squirm through a corridor of charred filth and pulsating tissue, you'll know precisely what we mean.) Your enemies, too, look like walking autopsies, and even the esoteric puzzles—one of which requires you to douse a raw liver in chemicals in order to oxygenate a fire—reflect the same foul obsession.

As for the plot, we know little other than heroine Heather's days as a mallrat are done. Konami's hush-hush, but it hints that *SH3*, although not a direct sequel, just might reveal something about the series' overall mythology.



5

PlayStation 2

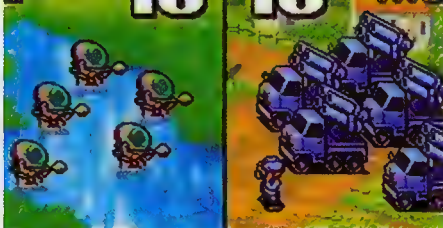
## APE ESCAPE 2

Publisher: Ubi Soft Developer: Sony Computer Entertainment Japan Release Date: Summer 2003

We humans think of monkeys as sidekicks we can dress up as secret agents or baseball players for our amusement. But with access to brain-enhancing helmets and a time machine (long story), monkeys often reveal their insatiable thirst for world domination. As in *Ape Escape* (PS1), the superintelligent monkey Specter and his simian minions will erase humankind from history

unless spiky-haired hero Jimmy captures them.

Luckily, he has a slew of appropriately wacky gadgets for the job. With the slingshot, he hits distant switches or airborne bad guys. A radio-controlled car lets him shepherd monkeys hither and yon or press otherwise-unreachable floor switches. And once he has tracked down the escaped primates, he snags 'em in the Time Net, zapping them back to the present, where their



Game Boy Advance

## ADVANCE WARS 2: BLACK HOLE RISING

Publisher: Nintendo Developer: Intelligent Systems Release Date: June 2003



When squashed-down army men and cartoon tanks clash, you know you're decidedly *not* in a world of s@#s—so it's safe for pocket generals everywhere to check out *Black Hole Rising*, the sequel to Nintendo's hit turn-based strategy game. Just like before, you're out to build armies, take over bases and towns, and wipe the enemy off the face of your GBA. New improvements include an AT-AT-like walking tank, two super-powers per commanding officer (a normal super one and a...uh...super super one), a greater variety of objectives, and map-specific features (like missile silos you can capture and use).

Advance Wars is the most Japanese-looking series to never come out in Japan.



Like Chariton said, "We're mad house! A mad house!"



thinking caps are confiscated. The right analog stick controls his various gadgets, while the left stick directs Jimmy's movements.

This sequel plays just like the much-acclaimed original, but has improved graphics and level design, more collectibles and minigames, and three all-new gadgets (for a total of 11). Remember: With great monkey-catching power, comes great monkey-catching responsibility.





**When you get the itch, punch it. Really get into the game.**

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# DIAMETER

## GOT GAME?

**Manage the Clock.** Watch the shot count down. As it winds under five, tighten the defensive screws. If it gets to three or less, be up on your man and ready to catch the shot right off his fingertips. Nothing beats an instant block.

Quinn the Good  
Goodfending is not called in MMA.  
Street Vol. 2, so every shot is fair  
game. Be sure you have a tall player  
near the rim at all times, as super  
blocks are a sure way to frustrate  
any opponent. To perform a block, hit  
shot/rebound with a turbo held,  
pumping in the path of the ball. It  
sounds easy, but careful monitoring  
of your turbo meter and court posi-  
tions are required to get the most out  
of shot-blocks.

**Gamebreaker Meter**  
Try to work your gamebreaker meter so it becomes full when you are in possession of the ball. Doing so will accomplish a couple of things, allowing you the most time to work on your shot at the net.

1111

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**SECRET SWITZERLAND**


Duck and Drive:  
You can duck  
while in first per-  
son by pressing  
and holding L2+L1 and this can  
help you take out enemies while  
using behind objects like boxes.

Rolling dodge into crouch attack:  
When an LED fires at you quickly  
roll to dodge the laser, and  
instead of getting up remain in  
a motionless crouch to improve  
your accuracy when firing at an

**Secret shooting:** When you have small buttons, tanks make sure to have your flash back set to the 4MM band. Throw a butane tank at your enemies, quickly flash back to the 4MM while the tank is in the air to blast the butane tank out of the air. Note this works best with the 4MM band gun.

This is a stick up.  
Make sure to use the fire extin-  
guisher, and your taser to liber-  
ate LED's from their weapons.

PLAYSTATION 2



Setting traps for big encounters: With a three small humane tanks, or one to five large humane tanks, you can set a trap for unsuspecting enemies using the first person's threesomes you made. Place the tanks next to a door, either you have selected several enemies on the other side of the door. Open the door, take a few shots at the LED's, and let them charge you as you back off into the forest. The humane tanks

Tranq and Bang dust.  
While running through a group at  
LED's drop a tranquilizer grenade  
followed immediately by a stun  
grenade. Make sure to keep run-  
ning. Note you can also do this  
by throwing them right after  
each other toward the enemy at  
medium range works best.





Hidden characters, extra weapons and undiscovered worlds are all at your fingertips. Cut out the cards, slip them into the game's case for a quick trick. When you get the itch, punch in these codes and really get into the game.

Visit our [www.gointothegame.com](http://www.gointothegame.com) website for \$5 off any game on this card. While supplies last. See details on the back of the card.

## DONKEY KONG COUNTRY



### MONKEY BUSINESS

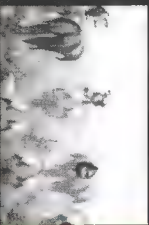
Don't forget Donkey Kong's Ground Pound (Down) and

A). When exact

of time on enemy, it bonuses them off the screen, and allows you to pick up an extra banana. Try stopping the ground along the routes of the levels for hidden bonuses and bonuses: single bananas or even 11p balloons!

• The first two sets of stages each have a Warp Barrel on a ledge hidden somewhere. Miss however, are invisible, and are in fact left over from the development of the game so game testers could finish the stages faster! Find one of these in a "speed" "warp bridge" to allow you to skip to the very end of the level and still succeed.

• The key to conquering DK Attack is to hit his head of enemies with your jump or crouched attack. Each enemy has a point when which is multiplied for each subsequent enemy you hit during your attack. Get up to eight crit-



GAME BOY ADVANCE

ter in a box, bounce on their heads, and collect special points or power!

• The cartoonish jump is the key to success in this game, and allows you to reach incredibly long distances, or jump floating in space. Simply start a crouched (B), and just as you begin to fall, press jump (A) and you'll continue to jump. Keep pressing B to increase your distance. Combining this with fast scrambling from the tops of palm trees on the first level, and you'll secure two 1UPs and one 2UP balloons!



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## DETAIN VINDICTIO



### DETAIN VINDICTIO

Don't forget Donkey Kong's Ground Pound (Down) and

of time on enemy, it bonuses them off the screen, and allows you to pick up an extra banana. Try stopping the ground along the routes of the levels for hidden bonuses and bonuses: single bananas or even 11p balloons!

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## STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC



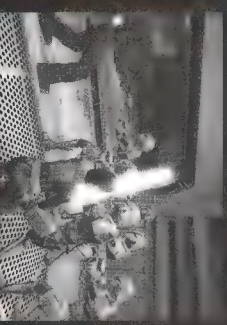
### USE THE FORCE!

Don't forget Donkey Kong's Ground Pound (Down) and

of time on enemy, it bonuses them off the screen, and allows you to pick up an extra banana. Try stopping the ground along the routes of the levels for hidden bonuses and bonuses: single bananas or even 11p balloons!

• The first two sets of stages each have a Warp Barrel on a ledge hidden somewhere. Miss however, are invisible, and are in fact left over from the development of the game so game testers could finish the stages faster! Find one of these in a "speed" "warp bridge" to allow you to skip to the very end of the level and still succeed.

• The key to conquering DK Attack is to hit his head of enemies with your jump or crouched attack. Each enemy has a point when which is multiplied for each subsequent enemy you hit during your attack. Get up to eight crit-



XBOX





4

■ Xbox

## BRUTE FORCE

■ Publisher: Microsoft  
 ■ Developer: Digital Anvil  
 ■ Release Date: May 28, 2003

Few games (well, no games really) promise to make their participants best friends forever, but then few games play like *Brute Force*, a high-concept shooter-meets-buddy-picture title that has up to four players covering each other's keisters. Once you choose who's controlling each of the four characters—sniper, scout, gun nut, man-lizard—your team plays together via splitscreen or system-link modes. Solo players can switch among characters and give orders to computer-controlled squad mates. But whether you play en masse or solo, teamwork is everything. "The four characters have different abilities," says Producer Enn Roberts, "so you'll get the best experience from coordinating the squad's activity to achieve your goals."

■ Hawk runs point while the others actively avoid seeking cover.

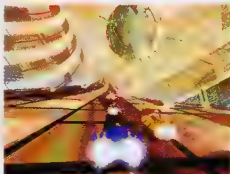


■ GameCube

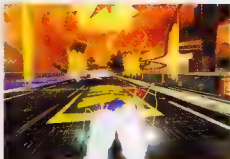
## F-ZERO GX

■ Publisher: Nintendo ■ Developer: Amusement Vision/Sega  
 ■ Release Date: August 2003

3



■ It's a lot easier to forget about Wipeout now.



As anyone who tried the previous Super Nintendo, N64, or GBA *F-Zero* incarnations will tell you, the series appeals to more than just race fans. Sure it has the subtle controls (leaning into turns is key) and customizable vehicles (with different body, boost, and grip ratings for each) for the car nuts, but it also has the futuristic settings and alien drivers sci-fi geeks love; the winding, roller-coaster-style tracks, huge jumps, and turbo boosts for the speed freaks; and ramming damage and exploding cars for agro combat fiends. And look at these screenshots—graphics whores should enjoy just watching *F-Zero GX* zip along. And all this comes together under the watchful eye of Sega's Amusement Vision, who knows a thing or two about racing games from its days creating the megapopular *Daytona* titles.



■ PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube

## SOUL CALIBUR 2

■ Publisher: Namco ■ Developer: Namco ■ Release Date: August 2003

2

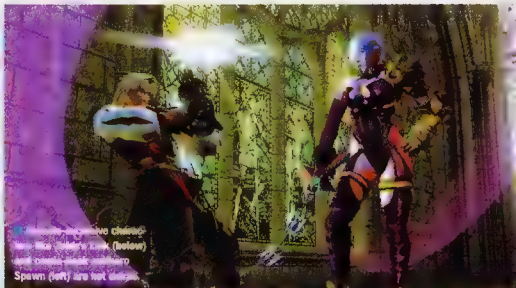
It's safe to say that *Cali 2*, the second coming of the world's finest weapons-based fighter, should deliver with pure panache on every front.

For one, it's certifiably stunning. Clothing flaps on windswept battlefields, and speed lines trace swords' trajectories. Yet unlike other recent gorgeous titles in the genre, *SC2*'s combat system is even more sophisticated than the game's appearance. Every agile move your character

executes has some practical importance. Take, for instance, twin-bladed terror Taki: Her swords catch the sun for a split second as she cartwheels like a human buzz saw, but it's the move's ability to advance around her enemy and strike from the side that really matters. Each challenger's arsenal boasts more than a hundred such attacks—every last one devilishly appropriate to a different circumstance. In fact, *SC2* is so

superbly balanced, you could justifiably call it chess on a sword edge.

Unlocking hundreds of character-specific weapons that you can equip in versus play will keep your inner collector occupied well into the crack-head hours of the night, long after the competition has gone home. We've been playing the import version for weeks now, and we're still completely hooked.







1

MOJO

# STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

Publisher: LucasArts Developer: BioWare Release Date: June 2003

Remember in *Empire Strikes Back* when Darth Vader says to his (newly handicapped) son, "If you only knew the power of the dark side..."? Though Luke never followed in his dad's footsteps, we've always wondered what the life of a dark Jedi would be like and are pleased to report that the upcoming *Knights of the Old Republic* offers the opportunity to find out.

During your quest to save the Republic from the evil Lords of Sith, several decisions can sway your character's moral pendulum to light or dark. Some choices are simple: For instance, walking through the lower-city section of Taris, you'll come across brutish bounty hunters harassing a civilian for cash. Want your character to lean toward the light side of the Force? Help the poor guy out. But if you don't mind (or are actively interested in) fuel-

ing your darker side, ignore his pleas and let him fend for himself.

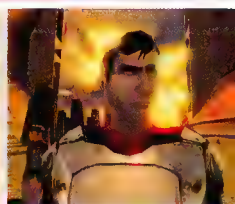
Other choices are more complex. On the water planet Manaan, for instance, a monstrous beast impervious to your attacks guards an item you must retrieve. The easier way to circumvent this roadblock is to poison the water, killing the creature but also forever damaging the planet's ecosystem. A true Jedi will take the much tougher avenue and discover routes around the creature in order to recover the object. You quickly realize that following the light side is the harder road to travel.

"That's intentional," says Producer Michael Gallo. "[This] fits into the *Star Wars* mythology that the dark side is the quicker, easier path."

Gallo tells us that if you make more dark decisions, your character's skin will even turn pale—think of the Emperor minus the crown's feet. Your Jedi's light/dark status will



■ The good, the bad, and the oh-so-ugly. Take a guess which one would be part of Vader's crew.



also affect which new missions open up for you in *KOTOR*.

As in the movies, the game offers a moment for redemption. "Around 7/8 of the way through, you'll have to make the ultimate choice [about which path to follow]," Gallo says. *KOTOR* packs both light- and dark-side endings, which LucasArts says will translate into roughly 80 hours of gameplay. From where we're sitting, these elements make this title look like the best choice for your summertime gaming thrills.

Say good-bye to the sun now.



■ Below: Your Jedi spins the lightsaber for good old-fashioned double-blaster action.



The battles in *KOTOR* are a mix of action and turn-based combat, as in BioWare's *Baldur's Gate* series for the PC. You'll move party members while the other two follow battle scripts. Of course, skirmishes have lost *Star Wars* atmosphere as every character's arsenal includes double-bladed lightsabers.



■ Minigames include swoop-bike races, a card game called Pazaak (it's a lot like blackjack), and turret shooting.





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# ON THE HORIZON

The games of summer not to your liking? Here's a look at many of the titles coming this fall and beyond



Illustration by Thomas Brinkner



## WHAT IS IT?

The *Heroes* moniker might fool you into thinking Sonic's gonna bust out his chain-mail and go medieval on some ring-stealin' dragons. You'd be wrong, of course, but this isn't exactly the same-old *Sonic*. Instead of roaming the Green Hills solo, you control one of four themed teams—Sonic, Dark, Rose, or Chaotix—each with three characters from the Sonic universe. Each group has its own unique stages, stacked with multiple paths and missions to complete (although we hope *Sonic Adventure 2*'s hellish "find the Chaos emerald with your radar" missions aren't repeated), and the always-connected group moves in a pack, letting you switch the lead character whenever you want.

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

*Heroes* marks the first time a *Sonic* game has been released simultaneously on multiple platforms. Aside from that, it's a combination of tired-and-true *Sonic* gameplay and a new form of the multiple-character model from *Sonic Adventure*. Say you're playing as the Sonic team and you need a burst of superspeed—put Sonic in the lead and off you go. Or maybe there's a chasm you need to fly over. Pop Tails in front and use his propeller tail to float the party over the danger. Need to reach the top of a cliff? Switch to Knuckles and climb. Now, let's get really crazy and say there's an enemy floating in the air in front of you. Switch to Tails, fly over and tap attack to "throw" your pals at the would-be foe. Now that's teamwork!



Robots' bots are no match for a dogpile of three Sonic Heroes attacking 'em once.







# LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIENCE

Platform: PlayStation 2, Xbox  
Developer: Crystal Dynamics  
Publisher: Square Enix

## WHAT IS IT?

*Defiance* continues the tale of two vampires, Raziel and Kain. These sanguinary heroes have quite a twisty history, spanning Raziel's two *Soul Reaver* games, Kain's two *Blood Omen* titles, and five systems (PS1, DC, PS2, Xbox, and GC) together, their tales weave a dense fabric with more than a few loose ends—understandably daunting to the uninitiated (or easily confused).

But fear not. Eager for new blood, the developers are keen to make *Defiance* accessible to neophytes. In fact, now is a good time to get acquainted with the series. Rather than relishing 'four games' worth of zigs and zags, *Defiance* briefly illustrates the lay of the labyrinth, then begins a new chapter of the story. This episode delves into the underlying mythology of Nosgoth, the dark and velvety (and, yes, gothic) world where the action takes place.

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

We should say, Nosgoth is the world where a lot more action takes place. Combat is the linchpin of *Defiance*. Both Raziel and Kain have a variety of melee moves, including opponent-lifting uppercuts and aerial attacks reminiscent of *Devil May Cry*. In the early version we saw, eight human soldiers surrounded Kain. He began by dispatching three at once with his sword; then he raised another with an underhand stroke before jumping up to the hapless human and kicking him off a cliff. He was already doing two more soldiers as the falling fellow's scream reached their ears. And of course, Kain drank blood from the last warrior's neck and walked away from the tussle with full health.

In *Defiance* players control Raziel and Kain in alternating chapters of the story. As the tale progresses, both characters will gain new abilities—some shared and some unique to each. For example, we saw Kain float gently down a 200-foot drop, while Raziel quickly scaled a sheer wall with his claws. Both characters have telekinesis, which they can use hurl enemies onto spikes or smash them into each other—or to break the humans' furniture out of spite.

Our early look at the game snowed few puzzles, no boss fights, and zero story details, but what we did see was intriguing.

*Defiance*'s bloody combat, smooth cinematic camera, and brooding castles put us in the mood for diablerie.



■ Kain juggling enemies?!? The devil may cry.



■ PlayStation 2, Xbox

## STAR TREK: SHATTERED UNIVERSE

■ Publisher: TDK Media  
■ View: 3D  
■ Age: 12 and up

Meet an original Star Trek character in this space-combat game. You'll take place during the Klingon invasion of the planet Tarsus. The Klingons are the bad guys.



■ PlayStation 2, Xbox

## LORD OF THE RINGS: TREASON OF ISENGARD

■ Publisher: EA  
■ View: 3D  
■ Age: 12 and up

This game is a sequel to the first Lord of the Rings game. It's a third-person action game. You'll play as Aragorn, the King of Gondor, and his allies.

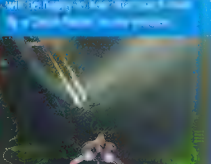


■ PlayStation 2, Xbox

## BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

■ Publisher: EA  
■ View: 3D  
■ Age: 12 and up

Play as a Starship Captain in this space shooter designed by the game responsible for the online hit Halo. It's a first-person shooter game. You'll play as a Starship Captain.







■ This character has taken a darker path, as evidenced by his snappy sense of style.



## WHAT IS IT?

This is the story of a hero. And since this hero is—in fact—you, he's perhaps the greatest swordsman and doer of good deeds ever, a knight so saintly, sunshine pours from his rear. Or maybe he's a downright creep, the kind who would rob a blind beggar and then use the stolen loot to buy a sword to stab him. Perhaps he's even the sort who likes to wear a chicken suit into combat while fighting off his foes with a frying pan.

Formerly known as *Project Ego*, *Fable* promises epic RPG action and a totally malleable hero. Game designer Peter Molyneux has gone on record claiming

this Xbox game will be the best RPG ever, and although the jury is still out on that boast, there's no doubt *Fable's* creators at Big Blue Box are aiming sky-high. The game takes place over the course of the hero's lifetime, sending him on an epic quest to find his parents' killers—and then on to explore the larger mystery of how their deaths fit into the world around him.

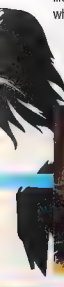
## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

What you do in *Fable's* world shapes your hero; your three different attributes (Strength, Skill, and Willpower) can be developed separately, in conjunction with

one another, or not at all. "If you just hit things over the head all the time with the sword," says Lead Programmer Simon Carter, "your Strength will go up. If you take things a bit more carefully and use your bow and stealth-attack people, your Skill will go up. And if you use your magic an awful lot, your Willpower will go up. As you develop all these things, your hero will slowly change." Specifically, your hero's appearance changes to reflect his development; a magically inclined character will begin to lose his hair, sport arcane tattoos, and eventually be trailed by a silvish-blue haze. Moral choices will also have an

effect—a totally evil character will draw bugs. "Flies are obviously attracted to evil," Lead Designer Dene Carter points out.

*Fable's* world is inhabited by (among others) huge rock trolls, pants-stealing nymphs, and werewolf-like creatures called Balverines that can infect the hero with lycanthropy. It's a European fairy tale brought to life, and from what we've seen, it looks gorgeous. In motion, the real-time combat and icon-based spellcasting system seemed smooth, but the real test will be how well the developers can balance the need for combat options while not pulling players out of the fantasy.



■ Your character grows old over time. Eventually, you'll turn in your vorpal blade for a walker.

Xbox  
**ARMED & DANGEROUS**  
Pub: LucasArts | Dev: Planet Moon  
Only on Xbox  
A fast-paced, action-packed game that puts you in the shoes of a elite police officer. You'll be the first to respond to a crime scene, and you'll be the first to bring the bad guys down. Armed & Dangerous is a fast-paced, action-packed game that puts you in the shoes of a elite police officer. You'll be the first to respond to a crime scene, and you'll be the first to bring the bad guys down.  
Only on Xbox  
Only on PS2

PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube  
**THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT**  
Pub: EA Games | Dev: Maxis  
Only on PlayStation 2  
The Sims is the most popular PC game of all time, and now it's coming to the console. The Sims: Bustin' Out is a fast-paced, action-packed game that puts you in the shoes of a elite police officer. You'll be the first to respond to a crime scene, and you'll be the first to bring the bad guys down.  
Only on PlayStation 2

Xbox  
**HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION**  
Pub: EA Games | Dev: EA GAMES  
Only on Xbox  
A fast-paced, action-packed game that puts you in the shoes of a elite police officer. You'll be the first to respond to a crime scene, and you'll be the first to bring the bad guys down.  
Only on Xbox



# PLAY OUTSIDE THE BOX!



## DEF JAM: VENDETTA

Three parts brawler and one part hip-hop video, Def Jam: Vendetta is clearly one of the most unique wrestling games available. Here, you've got a wrestler that puts gameplay before pageantry, offers action in place of entrance videos, and prizes super-sized special moves over the all-flair-but-no-pain People's Elbow. Plus, there's a story. And while the story isn't Pulitzer-worthy, it'll keep you battling through to the finale. The action starts with you picking a hero who's returning to his old stomping ground to help out an old friend who owes a dangerous man some money. His life's in danger, and since your old pal can't fight, you're drawn into an underground fight-club atmosphere ruled by money, power, gold chains, and cornrows. While the machismo gets laid on thick, it all works together here. After all, this game's backed by a rap label. The Def Jam crew members are the villains, with each artist acting as a boss. As you climb the ranks in Story mode and struggle to get the girl (well, girls—there's more than one), you'll earn cash, which you can use to buy attribute upgrades. There's all kinds of other stuff to unlock, too: new fighters (39 in all), stages, and even swank Phat farm threads, in case your wardrobe is low on powder blue track suits.



# BREAK OUT OF

# Butterfinger

# THE ORDINARY



## DYNASTY WARRIORS 4 PS2

Under the hard difficulty play the Hu Lao Gate level on the Allied Forces side. You must have a level 9 Star Pike. Defeat Lu Bu to get the weapon. You can get this weapon in Free Mode.

At the Yellow Turban Fortress, as the Allied Forces under the hard difficulty setting, kill the following in this order: He Yi, Pei Yaun Shao, and Chen Yaunzhi. You must complete killing them in under six minutes. The weapon will have +54 attack power and at Level 9.



Play the Sun Jian Invasion Battle Level on Yuan Shao's side. Before the enemy backup troops arrive, enter the castle from the top. A supply team will appear to the south of the castle. If you defeat the Supply Captain of the Supply Team, you will get the Charge Bracer.



## TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER® 4

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats." Enter `watch_me_xplode` to unlock all cheats.

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats." Enter `honielist` to unlock Mike Vally and other secret skaters.



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## WHAT IS IT?

Five hunters, all carrying wooden spears, cautiously approach a T-Rex. In videogame terms, this is known as a "bad idea." When they toss their spears, the Rex rises up. It's pissed, and someone's going to get hurt badly. And we're sad to say that the red stuff spurting out of the dinosaur's wounded belly and spraying from the hunter's wrecked corpse crunched between its jagged teeth isn't raspberry jam.

Peter Molyneux, the brains behind such PC classics as *Populous* and *Black & White*, calls *B.C.* "the goriest game ever." After watching hunters get torn apart, smushed, and otherwise divested of their lives in the most painful ways imaginable, we'd have to admit he may be right. *B.C.* makes no bones about life being cheap and death being free and all-too-easy. Call it the first third-person "existence is suffering" simulator for Xbox.

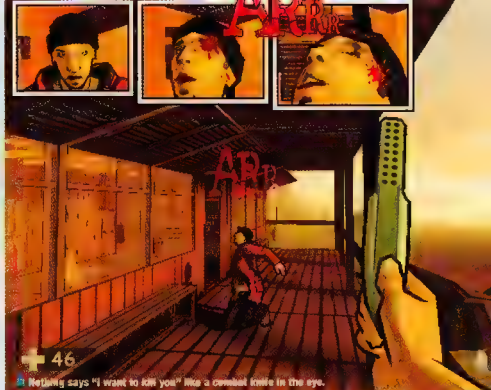
Players control a tribe, one member at a time, during their 100-mile journey to reach a safe haven. Along the way, you discover fire, build settlements and temples, invent new tools, craft weapons, and play havoc with the game's environments. In this fantastical world, early humans coexist with dinosaurs, so brains are the only way brawn can be beaten. Use fire to wipe

out a stand of fruit trees, and the animals eating the fruit will flee, as will the carnivores that feed on them; block off a water supply by building a wall around it, and watch all the animals head out in search of another drinking spot.

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

All the game's creatures, from the fear-some T-Rex down to the lowliest rat, will be influenced by hunger and thirst. In addition, every animal in the game, save for one quite notable exception, has been plucked directly from the fossil record. "Real creatures were as exciting and as ferocious as anything we could come up with here," says *B.C.*'s Development Director Matt Clifton, "especially the underwater ones."

Oh, and that notable exception? According to Lead Designer Ben Cousins, it's something completely different. And quite horrible. "Along the way," Cousins told us, "they'll meet another [animal] that we're not talking about. What we're doing is we're kind of thinking about a hypothetical prehistoric past where man was directly competing with another type of intelligent creature." It's kill or be killed when *B.C.* ships this fall.



■ PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube

## XIII

■ Publisher: Ubi Soft ■ Developer: Ubi Soft ■ Release Date: October 2003

## WHAT IS IT?

Ubi Soft's first-person cartoony shooter is based on a similarly named French political-thriller comic. Think about the classic films *Parallax View* and *The Manchurian Candidate*, then add hand-drawn, moody styling reminiscent of Eidos' *Fear Effect* (PS1) and comic expletives ("Bam!")

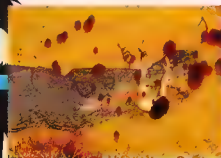
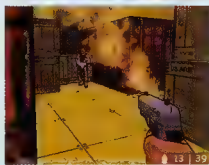
An amnesiac with a tattoo bearing "XIII" wakes up on a beach after a presidential assassination, and is soon on the run from the FBI and the XX, an organization set to kill him. Did XIII pull the trigger or was he trying to intervene? You'll have more than 30 levels to figure that out. Bottles, ashtrays, and anything else you can pick up complement standard weapon accoutrements, and players can use stealth, sniping, and a "sixth sense" (displayed in comic-style window panes) for tactical, heady gameplay. With any luck, you'll see plenty of dead people.

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

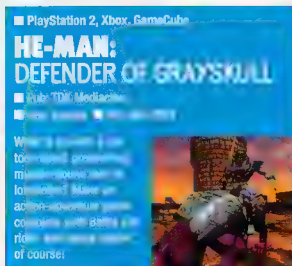
*XIII*'s dark, seductive theme is emphasized through its art, but the game's modus operandi is action. Producer Damien Moret offers an example: "You escape from a military base in a cable car. You that think [you're] OK, but soldiers are attacking you with bazookas, so you have to leave the cable car before it crashes..."



■ Above/below: The first GameCube shots.



■ Above left: Failing to rub this giant gator's belly fast enough, you die.





Join the Anniversary  
**BASH**



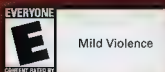
**WHY SURF THE NET WHEN YOU CAN CONTROL IT.**

Control the net in a whole new way with Mega Man Battle Network 5. This time, Mega Man and his partner, Net Navi, are on a mission to stop the evil forces of the Net. Mega Man Battle Network 5 features a new set of enemies, a new set of weapons, and a new set of challenges. Mega Man Battle Network 5 is the perfect game for anyone who loves to surf the net and control it.

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■ Xbox

## DEAD MAN'S HAND

■ Publisher: Atari ■ Developer: Human Head ■ Release Date: Fall 2003



### WHAT IS IT?

Human Head, maker of *Rune: Viking Warlord* (PS2), is charting new frontiers by tackling an Old West motif in this first-person shooter. As the double-crossed desperado El Tejón, your lust for vengeance leads you to myriad good, bad, and ugly Wild West-themed mission-based scenarios, including showdowns, poker, and horseback and train-top gunfights.



### WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

*Dead Man's Hand* holds a couple of aces, like the Legend system, which offers rewards for clever play. For instance, hurl a whiskey bomb at an opponent in an out-house instead of spraying him with bullets and you'll gain the ability to fire special trick shots, which are sure to come in handy. Also, Xbox Live deathmatches promise to have your saddles blazing.



### WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Valve promises the Xbox edition will have better special effects, improved characters and environments, richer sound, and levels from the PC sequel, *Condition Zero*, plus Xbox-exclusive multiplayer maps and two new solo missions for good measure.

Though Valve excitedly notes that *Counter-Strike* will support Xbox Live for online play, PC players who hope to compete against Xbox owners will be disappointed to discover that the versions won't connect. Valve also hasn't decided whether Xbox users will be able access player-created content, one of the most popular features of the PC game. Will *Counter-Strike* conquer the console world? We'll know soon enough.



■ PlayStation 2, Xbox

## SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

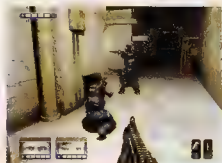
■ Publisher: Sierra ■ Developer: Argonaut ■ Release Date: October 2003

### WHAT IS IT?

You have the right to remain anxious. *SWAT: Global Strike Team* promises to blend the strategy and tactics of *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon*, the kind of action found in shooters like *Halo*, and *Splinter Cell*-style lighting and shadows.

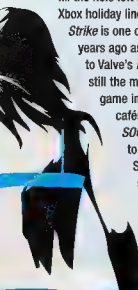
### WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

The main twist to the game is that you're supposed to arrest more gang members than you kill. Also, voice recognition via a headset controller lets you order around computer-controlled partners, or you can split the screen for cooperative and death-match modes. Expect over 20 levels, including futuristic Los Angeles, Costa Rica, London, and Siberia missions. Online play is noticeably absent, but Xboxers will be able to download extra levels.



### WHAT IS IT?

Few first-person shooters could possibly fill the hole left by *Halo 2* in this year's Xbox holiday lineup. In theory, *Counter-Strike* is one of them. Released four years ago as a free multiplayer patch to Valve's *Half-Life*, *Counter-Strike* is still the most-played networked PC game in college dorms and cybercafés around the world. As in *SOCOM*, players are assigned to one of two warring teams: Soldiers or Terrorists. This simple, storyless formula of real weapons and intense action has hooked millions of arm-chair commandos.



■ Xbox

## SHADOW OPS: RED MERCURY

■ Pub: Atari ■ Dev: Zenobia ■ Release Date: Fall 2003

Imagine the classic action hero in the modern world.

Shadow Ops: Red Mercury is a first-person shooter that takes the classic action hero and puts him in the modern world. The game is set in a dark, industrial setting, and the player is a member of a secret organization. The game is a first-person shooter, and the player is a member of a secret organization.



■ Xbox, GameCube

## THE GREAT ESCAPE

■ Pub: Gotham ■ Dev: Elemental ■ Release Date: Fall 2003

Escape from a dark world using the game's unique, the classic action hero in the modern world. The game is set in a dark, industrial setting, and the player is a member of a secret organization. The game is a first-person shooter, and the player is a member of a secret organization.



■ Xbox, GameCube

## TRINITY

■ Pub: Activision ■ Dev: Neoware ■ Release Date: Fall 2003

The game is set in a dark, industrial setting, and the player is a member of a secret organization. The game is a first-person shooter, and the player is a member of a secret organization.





# THE GREAT ESCAPE

Shot down behind enemy lines.  
A prisoner of the Nazi war machine.  
You must guide your band of heroes in the  
greatest escape in history.

Strike of the system with a  
 ... ..

Commander motorcycles, mopeds and other military vehicles as well as speed to freedom.

THE HON. THE SECRETARY OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY



PlayStation 2

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for Rating Information

[illegible]





PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube

## SSX 3

Publisher: EA Sports Big Developer: EA Canada Release Date: Fall 2003

### WHAT IS IT?

Instead of having tracks placed around the world, the latest SSX attempts to fulfill all of your snowboarding desires on a single lonely mountain. After seeing the game, we can attest to Producer Larry LaPierre's claim that said mountain is indeed "#%\$@ big!" Courses are spread across three seamlessly interconnected peaks, and rival boarders challenge you to both race- and trick-focused events as you ride down this side of Mother Earth. Thankfully, producing stylish runs should be easier this time around. "The core tricks have been redone to give an even better feel," says LaPierre.

### WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

It's quite a departure having one grandiose mountain that's totally accessible without any loading breaks—and it works pretty well from what we've seen so far. The single-player mode takes full advantage of this feature, as the finale consists of a 30-minute sprint down all three intertwining peaks against your character's main rival. But there's still much to accomplish after you've declared king of the hill. SSX 3 includes more than 100 challenges, such as hand planting a fence or grinding billboards. And if you have the skills to complete these tasks, you'll gain access to unique character apparel, including new jackets and those oh-so-wacky Dr. Seuss-style top hats.



Expect songs by Queens of the Stone Age, X-Ecutioners, R.E.M.D., and more.



### WHAT IS IT?

Devouring countless pizza slices over the years hasn't stopped the world's most famous turtles from gettin' back into shape for their highly anticipated return to the gaming world. This action beat-'em-up has cartoon-style visuals and Story and Versus modes, where mastering the katana, bo staff, nunchaku, and sai enables you to make mincemeat out of Shred-head and his nefarious Foot clan.

### WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Back in the day, many of us plunked down massive coinage on the addictive TMNT arcade games, so it's good news Konami

has brought back some of those team members to advise on this project. "We incorporated their feedback and experience," says Producer Kengo Nakamura, "and created new features to make sure these games keep what was fun about the old games, but [also] evolve for next-generation videogame systems."

Too bad Story mode only supports two-player co-op rather than four like the now-ancient arcade brawlers. But at least we can knock the snot out of a friend in Versus mode with nonturtle characters like April O'Neal and Shredder. And fear not, Vanilla Ice won't be reviving his ninja rap (from the second TMNT film) for the game.



PlayStation 2, GameCube

## TAK AND THE POWER OF JUJU

PlayStation 2, GameCube



PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube

## CRASH NITRO KART

PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube



PlayStation 2, Xbox

## CHAIN GANG

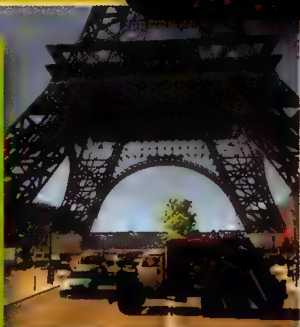
PlayStation 2, Xbox





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■ Xbox

# MORROWIND GAME OF THE YEAR EDITION

■ Publisher: Bethesda ■ Developer: Bethesda  
■ Release Date: Fall 2003

## WHAT IS IT?

Think of it as *Morrowind-Plus-Plus* with braggadocio. This value-priced package rolls together 2002's Xbox hit first-person RPG *Morrowind* plus two new expansion packs (which were sold separately on PC). Fans appreciated *Morrowind*'s 20-plus character classes and sprawling 3D world full of quests. This edition augments that world with more. A lot more.

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Bethesda's *Tribunal* expansion adds new armor, weapons, enemies, and a continuation of the previous story line, while the *Bloodmoon* scenario splits off with a new emphasis on werewolves, winter weather, and the wilderness. Newbies can play through *Morrowind*, fans can resume their previous saved Xbox games, and anyone can bark at the moon from the start.

■ PlayStation 2

# VECTORMAN

■ Publisher: Sega ■ Developer: Pseudo Interactive ■ Release Date: January 2004



## WHAT IS IT?

Looking at these screenshots, you may not think this is the same *Vectorman* from the late days of the 16-bit Sega Genesis. That's because this new ass-kicking V-man is more Master Chef than the big pile of balls he used to be. But don't worry, he's still saving the universe from technology run amok in this third-person actioner.

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

It makes our extremities tingle to think about another 16-bit franchise getting a 21st-century overhaul. But to satisfy our trigger finger's urge for carnage, *Vectorman* will have access to an arsenal of 15 weapons and 25 upgrades, including incinerators, Freon cannons, starblasters, bazookas, and grapplers. (Aw, he's Ratchet and Clank.) Most of the environments are destructible, too, so, for example, you could destroy a huge pillar and then use it as cover while you plan your next attack.



■ Choose a hilt and blade color to produce your own unique lightsaber.

■ Xbox

# STAR WARS JEDI KNIGHT: JEDI ACADEMY

■ Publisher: LucasArts ■ Developer: Raven ■ Release Date: Fall 2003

## WHAT IS IT?

Xbox-owning Padawans, pack your bags—it's time to visit Jedi Master Luke Skywalker and learn the ways of the Force. Jetting across the galaxy to tackle missions might make your classmates label you a teacher's pet, but at least your customizable character will be rewarded with new techniques and Force powers (like Force Push and that blue lightning).

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Unlike its predecessor (*Jedi Outcast*), *Jedi Academy*'s combat is definitely lightsaber-centric. You can switch to first-person perspective and complete the game using traditional weapons like blaster rifles and Wookiee bowcasters, but, as Producer Brett Testi puts it, "That's not the way of a true Jedi." We respectfully submit that bad coiffures and facial hair shouldn't be either.



## WHAT IS IT?

The fact that Xbox desperately needs another RPG notwithstanding, *Sudeki* is pretty intriguing. It's an action-RPG chronicling the journey of four heroes on a quest to save their shattered land. Looks and sounds like another Japanese RPG, right? Wrong! It's being created by Climax (*Speed Kings*,  *MotoGP 2*) from jolly ole England. The art and gameplay design just have a strong Eastern influence.

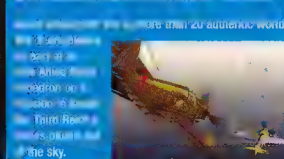
## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

*Sudeki* gives you the interesting ability to command four characters in realtime. While you directly control one hero's actions, the other three react to your orders and the gun's battle situation. Each of the gunslinger, huntress, wizard, and swordsman characters is distinctly different—and have different moves, spells, and team attacks—so expect to jump around among them.

■ PlayStation 2, GameCube

# SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY

■ Publisher: EA ■ Developer: EA ■ Release Date: Fall 2003



■ Xbox

# SAM & MAX

■ Publisher: LucasArts ■ Developer: LucasArts ■ Release Date: Fall 2003



■ Xbox

# ARX FATALIS

■ Publisher: Dreamcatcher ■ Developer: Dreamcatcher ■ Release Date: Fall 2003







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PlayStation 2



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UNLAWFUL FLIGHT TO AVOID PROSECUTION — MURDER

## LUCAS BENJAMIN AKER



Aliases: Lou, Luc, "Commander," Benjamin Jaker, Lucky

### DESCRIPTION

Date of Birth:

August 6, 1961

Height:

5' 8"

Scars and Marks:

Aker has a U.S. flag tattooed on his right shoulder

Eyes:

Blue

Complexion:

White

Nationality:

American

**Remarks:** A self-taught commando, Aker has worked as a freelance mercenary. This hyper-patriotic militia leader is responsible for leading organizations that train in covert warfare, specifically against the U.S. Government. His militia organization is dedicated to "preventing the disintegration of America." Aker has run camps in Alabama, Florida and Utah.

CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

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PlayStation.2



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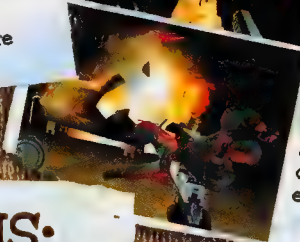
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AK74

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ATARI



# CASTLEVANIA REVAMPED

Konami digs straight to the roots to rebuild this classic series for its PlayStation 2 debut

by Shane Bettenhausen

**I**n halls gone mad, its walls could well induce the strength of a werewolf. Its basements are filled with a legion of madmen, but 17 years after its bloody groundbreaking, *Castlevania* is still home, sweet home to hardcore gamers. Certainly, the ultra-Goth skyscraping castle at the center of the *Castlevania* series has had its share of renovations. History looks kindly on the successful retits (the infusion of role-playing elements into *Symphony of the Night* for PlayStation)

and longs to forget the painful death of misadventures (the chunky 3D *Castlevania* for Nintendo 64). But, in fact, the series has weathered 17 years in the fog, re-emerging as a new breed of heroes—*Castlevania's* lineage of whip-cracking boys—have crumbled its castle to rubble.

But that sturdy legacy also presents a home owner's headache for developer Konami. Current gamers who weren't around for the series' classic installments may not get its old-school appeal, and its convoluted chronology—boss

and Shadow—come back from the dead—might stand to make Cher jealous—is bound to baffle even longtime fans. If *Castlevania* is to lure in a new generation, change is in order.

*Castlevania: Lament of Innocence*, due exclusively for PlayStation 2 in November, seeks to suck in new-blood gamers by tossing out the series' heavily marked-up blueprints. *Lament* unleashes a new beginning—a new hero, a story line that finally explains the genesis of Dracula, and a revolutionary 3D reworking of the series' gameplay.





■ The original whipper-snapper: Leon Belmont

#### Your first bite

"It's funny how there are vampire myths all over Europe and Southeast Asia, yet the only story people seem to remember is Dracula," says Koji Igarashi—he'd rather you call him "Iga"—the producer who holds the keys to *Castlevania*. (He's been involved with the series since *Symphony of the Night*.) Tall, pale, and clad entirely in black, Iga would make a fine Dracula in a monster flick. Well, a Japanese Dracula, anyway. It makes us

undead—and that makes him perfectly suited for the task of re-imagining the rusty Belmont-whips-Drac mythos. "I love the world of Dracula," says Iga, "and I want to debut on the PS2 very dramatically by making this the best *Castlevania* ever."

One of Iga's first steps for his latest *Castlevania* was to devise a new setting within the series' already overstuffed timeline. "It's hard to fit in new games, since Dracula is only supposed to revive every 100 years.... We're out of possible

**"I want to debut on the PS2 very dramatically by making this the best *Castlevania* ever."**

—*Castlevania* Producer Koji Igarashi

wonder if there's more to his "vampire myths all over Southeast Asia" comment than he's letting on. (Our hands cover our throats a few times during our interview with Iga at Konami's Tokyo HQ.) The man holds an interest in the macabre that extends far beyond the games he designs—he's genuinely intrigued by the world of the

centuries," he says. "Also, in the previous games, the Belmont clan and Dracula are already established—you never really know why they keep fighting." Rather than attempting to squeeze in yet another vampiric rebirth of the stock characters, Iga has chosen to tell the origin of the entire franchise. "In *Lament of Innocence*, I want to explain



■ Leon's confrontation with Drac (right) unfolds in a slick real-time cineme...with lots of styling products. One of Leon's whip combos (far right) flicks foes into the air for juggle combos.





Some call it a 3D action-adventure game. We, decades later, call it the People's Choice. The treatment of the Belmonts isn't the what you're looking for. Instead,



where my Dracula came from and why the Belmonts became vampire hunters," he tells us. So, the game is set in the 11th century—a full 500 years before the earliest of the already-chronicled *Castlevania* events—when Dracula first becomes a vampire.

Leon Belmont stars as *Lament's* pretty-boy

helping young heroes ('cause he used to be a vampire hunter himself). He hands over his trusty whip to Leon, and the adventure begins. "When Leon goes after Sara, he has no foreknowledge of Dracula or the monster that took his girl," says Iga. "He just goes in to save her, and his destiny is waiting for him in the castle."

**"I seriously feel like I've looked at every 3D game ever made."**

—*Castlevania* Producer Koji Igarashi, on his research for *Lament*

hero and progenitor of the famous clan. Unlike past whip-toting Belmonts, he's no random stud in leather shorts; rather, he's a knight in the service of a local baron, so he's actually a well-respected, upstanding chap. His happiness heads south, however, when a creepy beast kidnaps his fiancée, a demure cutie named Sara. Before he can rescue his intended, Leon must get permission from the Church—but the clergy's too busy waging the Crusades to look into the matter. So Leon turns in his sword, gives up his rank, and thumbs his nose at their indifference.

As he follows the beast's trail to the cheery-sounding Dark Woods, he runs into Rinaldo Gandolfi, a crusty alchemist with a soft spot for

#### Blood simple

"What I care about is bringing in just enough story, not to overwhelm or spoil the action," Iga explains. "The story must serve to elevate the experience." So, once the cinematic opening does its thing, the game gets down to business, and you, as Leon, embark on your whipping frenzy in Dracula's abode. And if you thought the 11th-century backstory drew new blood from the series, steady yourself—the radically rethought gameplay taps an even greater vein of inspiration.

First and foremost, *Lament of Innocence* completely reworks the series' traditional 2D side-scrolling gameplay into 3D. And while it's not the first *Castlevania* attempted in *tres dimensiones*, it

## beyond castlevania

### ACTUAL (NO, REALLY) IDEAS FOR FUTURE SERIES INSTALLMENTS

*Castlevania* mastermind Koji Igarashi has a stockpile of game concepts lurking in his coffinlike mind. Ask him the right questions (or offer him the right beverages) and they start spewing out like mad. We can't guarantee that any of these ideas will come to fruition, but we've concocted some illustrative screenshots just in case. Note: We did not make these game concepts up. Honest.

#### CASTLEVIRUS



"Imagine a cyber *Castlevania* world in which Dracula is a computer virus and Belmont is the virtual vaccine who must defeat him," says Iga. Our response to this way-out, there futuristic idea? "Whoa."

#### BLAXPLOVANIA



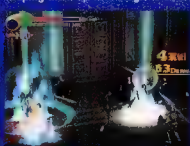
"I really enjoyed the vampire movie *Blade*," says Iga. "So, if the game took place in modern times, maybe a black guy could be the hero of *Castlevania*." Picture a game mixing all the wicked undead monsters we love with a dose of urban fable. Hell, it would have to be better than the zany *Blade II* for PS2 and Xbox that crawled to store shelves last year.

(Continued on page 116)

## cool fusion

### MAGIC ORBS PUMP UP YOUR SUBWEAPONS

Like his many Belmont descendants, Leon tosses a mean flask of holy water. He also finds daggers, axes, crosses, and crystals (an all-new item that works like a land mine) as he explores the castle. Heaving these handy pickups at foes is fun, but soup- ing them up with magic is even better. As in *Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance*



(GBA), you can imbue each subweapon in *Lament* with seven different effects by combining them with Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, White, Black, and Purple Orbs.

Each of the 35 possible Orb-weapon combos offers a powerful, screen-searing attack. Among the jaw-dropping ones we witnessed: a flying dragon made of daggers that swirls across the screen and trounces enemies; a duo of massive ax blades that orbit Leon, providing powerful defense; and a massive crucifix of light that obliterates all onscreen foes.



■ Leon prepares to flip the hell out of this switch.



# LOOKING FOR A NEW HERO!



## RENT-A-HERO No.1 LYNCH-O-



Comic Mischief  
Mild Violence

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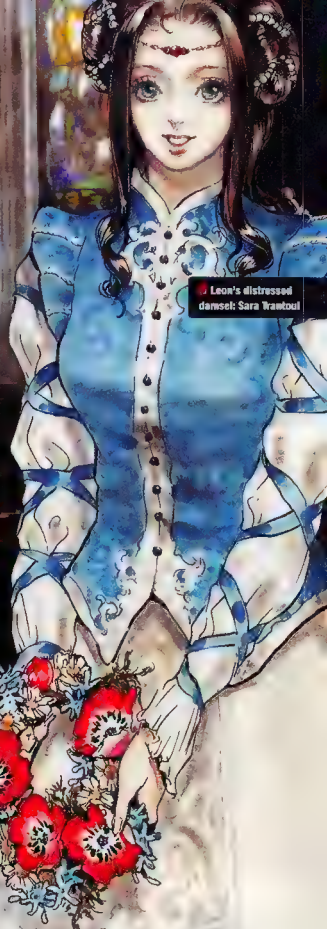
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Leon's distressed damsel: Sara Wamboul

is the first one Konami has done right, Iga adamantly believes. "There are many problems with the N64 *Castlevanias*," he says, "the biggest being that it just isn't fun to control your character." While he and his team had no involvement with those games, they've studied them closely as examples of what *not* to do while making theirs.

Gameplay research wasn't limited to games within the *Castlevania* family. "I seriously feel like I've looked at every 3D game ever made," says Iga, laughing. "Perfecting the camera is the most difficult aspect. In a 2D game, it's easy to see the distance between your character and an enemy. But in 3D, it's tough to display the distance properly because the camera is always changing." He made the decision to eschew the admittedly cool-looking cinematic camera style of Capcom's *Devil May Cry* (PS2) in favor of a fixed overhead camera

that swoops and pans only in areas with no combat. The end result is a perspective similar to that of the novel PS2 adventure *Ico*; you'll never be surprised by a confusing angle shift while you're in the thick of skeleton-whipping action.

And whip you will—prepare to lash out at a massive legion of 70-plus beasts. *Lament* abandons the RPG-tinged swordplay of *Symphony of the Night* in favor of classic whipping action. Although you'll find subweapons, armor, Relics, and other items during your quest, the whip is the only weapon Leon wields. However, your trusty leather lash changes as you progress. "The alchemist eventually powers up the whip into the legendary Vampire Killer," explains Iga, "and you can also change the whip's properties by applying magic like Flame or Frost." Oh, and it's handy in peacetime situations, too: Use it to swing between

## better, stronger, faster

### NEW RELICS BRING BIONICS TO THE MIDDLE AGES

Blistering spell-fusion attacks provide the meat of your offensive capabilities, but Leon has a few supernatural powers up his sleeve, too: He finds some legendary Magic Relics stowed away in Drac's castle. The catch? Leon can't use these skill boosters right away. "Guys like Alucard and Dracula can use magical Relics because they're not human," explains Konami's Iga. "The alchemist performs some enhancements to Leon's left arm so he can use them, too." A bionic vampire hunter from a millennium ago? That's why we love videogames. You'll find 10 Relics in all, and we give you a peek at five of them:



Leon equips with his magical Relics. (Clockwise from top left)

**LEG OF THE WOLF**—Equip this severed lupine appendage to give Leon superhuman speed. "There are places in the castle that are only accessible when you use this magic," explains Iga.

**STARDUST**—Turn on this fantastical fairy powder to regenerate your health. Handy during boss encounters, but it wastes away your Magic meter.

**INVINCIBILITY POT**—Remember the jug you'd pick up to become invincible for a few seconds in the original NES *Castlevania*? It's back, in Relic form. And boy, does it use up Magic points like crazy.

**LUCIFER'S SWORD**—This demonic Relic transforms Leon's body into a human Ginsu. Hurl yourself at enemies to cut like a knife.

**SVAROG STATUE**—While holding this mysterious idol statue, Leon leaves a trail of fire in his wake, that damages enemies if they touch it.





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Others will  
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off your pansy  
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get any crazier, along comes Aki  
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- IGN

**WHICH ONE ARE YOU GOING TO PLAY?**



Comic Mischief  
Violence



GAME BOY ADVANCE



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■ Leon's whip is handy for both swinging through the belly (above) and smiting foes (below).



platforms or to pull Leon up onto a high ledge.

The shift away from *Symphonia*'s stat-building and role-playing elements means *Lament* doesn't dish out experience points. Although Iga is eager to draw new players to the series, he feels the level-up system might have made the game too easy. "In *Symphonia*, less-skilled players can level up until they're able to progress," he says. "It's a drawback for skilled gamers who find the game too easy as they gain levels." Now, talented players will be challenged throughout, and weaker players must explore every nook and cranny of the castle to find power-ups and healing items.

#### Teeth sunk in

So, we have the remarkably stylish Leon Belmont on a quest to save his beloved, armed with his whip and exploring a dangerous castle in full 3D...but what does it actually feel like to play? Damned fun. Even at this early stage, we can tell that painstaking research went into perfecting the gameplay. Movement is swift and tight, Leon double-jumps like a pro from the outset, and the fixed-camera perspective provides a stable view of the onscreen chaos.

Combat also provides monumental thrills. You have two attacks: a weak, speedy Light Attack

#### digging too deep

EMBARRASSING MOMENTS IN CASTLEVANIA HISTORY

##### HAUNTED CASTLE

The X-Box All Star Battle game with Leon Belmont



##### THE HAUNTED CASTLE AD

It's amazing how much the image of *Castlevania* has changed over the years. Now we have lush paintings of dapper heroes advertising the games, but back in 1988, Konami hawked the *Haunted Castle* arcade game with this ad. And you wonder why you've never heard of it.



and a powerful, slow Heavy Attack. Mix them in combos and Leon dishes out a Gothic ass-whupping that's as impressive to watch as it is rewarding to pull off with the controller. But wait, there's more: You can catch groups of vile monsters in your whip's wake to rack up multihit combos. Or bust out a nasty kick between whip licks, side-dash to avoid getting hit, and execute timely parry moves with expert presses of the Block button (each successful block raises your Magic meter). No past *Castlevania* title offers so many ways to crack undead skulls.

Of course, Leon's trek through the castle is

## illustrator of the undead

### AYAMI KOJIMA GIVES DRAC'S WORLD A WOMAN'S TOUCH



Back when Producer Koji Igarashi was working on *Symphonia of the Night* for PS1, he decided *Castlevania* needed an image makeover. "In old *Castlevania* games, you see a macho guy," he tells us, "but the story and character designs were lacking." So Iga sought out a romantic, beautiful art style with which to brand the series. After rummaging through a bookstore looking at cover illustrations, he found his artist: Ayami Kojima. And, yep, the character illustrations you see scattered throughout this cover story are hers. We had a rare opportunity to ask Miss Kojima a few questions about her work on the series, and we quickly discovered that she's full of surprises. You can find the full interview transcript at [egmgame.com](http://egmgame.com), but here are four things you might not have guessed about this petite, demure illustrator.

**SHE'S ENTIRELY SELF-TAUGHT**—That's right, she has no art-school education. In fact, she attributes her success to being unlimited by the conventions of rules and styles. "I think that I'm doing much better than those who went to art school because I just go with my gut feelings," she says.

**SHE PREFERS OLDER MEN...DRAWING THEM, THAT IS**—You might imagine that Kojima revels in drawing the fanciful, effeminate *Castlevania* heroes, but the young guys aren't her favorites. "I love drawing middle-aged guys," Kojima explains. "I really like drawing Count Dracula."

**SHE DIGS KUNG FU AND ROBOT COMICS**—Kojima prefers violent boys' comics to more girly stuff like *Sailor Moon*. Her favorites include *Fist of the North Star*, *Astro Boy*, and *2000 Nights*. "The themes in girls' comics are too boring," she says. "I wasn't satisfied with those books, so I gravitated to the boys' books for exciting heroes, villains, and action."

**SHE'S AS WEIRDED OUT BY COSPLAYERS AS WE ARE**—Cosplaying (in which fans dress up as their favorite game or anime characters) is always a little shocking, but Kojima has had encounters with it that hit especially close to home. "I once saw a bunch of guys who looked strangely familiar, and then I realized that they were cosplaying as my characters!" Kojima says. "I was shocked, but flattered, too—I asked if I could take their picture."



## digging too deep

### EMBARRASSING MOMENTS IN CASTLEVANIA HISTORY



#### KID DRACULA'S BOSS

In Japan, a zany *Castlevania* offshoot called *Kid Dracula* graced that country's version of the 8-bit NES. How zany? Above, that's Kid Dracula fighting a giant KKK member wearing a swastika-embellished hood. Runner-up for weirdest boss: the Statue of Liberty, which attacks by asking questions about America.

melee with a titanic boss monster (known as an Elemental Knight). Since this is *Castlevania*, the castle isn't entirely unfamiliar to longtime fans. "I'm not sure gamers will recognize them, but yes, some of the areas are from past games," explains Iga. "But you won't find a clock tower level here, since mechanical clocks weren't invented until the 13th century." Historical accuracy—the calling card of a developer who really gives a damn.

#### Sandcastlevania

Despite its 2D limitations, *Symphony of the Night* offered fantastic, ornate visuals. Conveying a similar level of Gothic beauty in three dimensions requires a lot of work. *Lament's* development team is four times larger than *Symphony's*, and mastering the PS2's proclivities took the group some time. "Designing a game is like building a sand castle," says Iga. "You'll build it all up, but when you come back later, it's collapsed and you have to start over from scratch." So, despite working for more than two years on *Symphony*, Iga and his team abandoned everything they'd created to start again on the PS2.

Though the graphics are crucial, it's still the gameplay that's integral to the *Castlevania* experience. So, before any regal rooms were mapped out, Iga focused on a barren engine with a placeholder character (a 3D model of *Symphony's* Richter Belmont) whipping his way through building-block environments that looked straight out of a *Metal Gear Solid* VR mission. Once the gameplay foundations were in place, the team started painting the castle walls.

It may not match the grisly grandeur of *Silent Hill* 3, but *Lament* already looks sweet—and in the screens here, the final pass of visual polish hasn't yet been applied. Much of the next six months will be spent refining the lush environments. You're also being denied the game's most impressive feature, since screens can't illustrate



Lee's gadget man: The Alchemist







the excellent motion-captured animation: Leon's whip moves with realistic fluidity and physics. A veteran director of stage productions helped design all of his acrobatic movements. "It's an

feel." "Since the story is set in such a different age from that of *Symphony*, I decided electric guitars would be out of place," says Yamane. "Instead, I used natural instruments for a more classical

**"The first thing I asked of my team was to make sure the game is very fast and smooth to play."**

—Castlevania Producer Koji Igarashi

old-timer's way of thinking," says Iga, "but the first thing I asked of my team was to make sure the game is very fast and smooth to play."

Iga chose longtime Konami composer Michiru Yamane, the woman behind *Symphony of the Night*'s memorably morbid tunes, to create *Lament of Innocence*'s all-new soundtrack. She brings a familiar blend of up-tempo beats and eerie classical beauty to the 40-plus tracks in *Lament*, but the music definitely has a unique

feel. "For our full interview with Michiru Yamane, head to [egmmag.com](http://egmmag.com).) The music we heard was stunning—so good, in fact, that Iga is considering packing a copy of the soundtrack with the game (as Konami is doing with *Silent Hill 3*).

On the voiceover front, *Lament* will ship with both English and Japanese dialogue tracks. The English acting we heard sounded just fine—probably since Iga personally oversaw its production at a professional recording studio in Hollywood.

## beyond castlevania

TWO MORE ACTUAL IDEAS FOR FUTURE SERIES INSTALLMENTS

CASTLEVANIA



In Japan, Konami produces several hit rhythm-action games, like *Bemani* and *DrumMania*. Castlevania Producer Iga says he sees potential in a music game based on the funky pipe organs, moaning choruses, and haunting oboe solos in *Castlevania*'s tunes. Frankly, we'd rather see DJ Drac do some mad scratchin' before we play another Brimley Spears game.

BRACULA MAKER



Perhaps drawing upon his work on Japan's Tokimeki Memorial dating-game series, Iga says he's conceived a sim game in which you raise Dracula through his formative teen years. Rigors of undead adolescence include awkward candlelight dinners at an Italian restaurant (watch out for garlic) and the issue of whether to bite on the first date. Again, we are not making these ideas up (although Iga is no doubt having a bit of fun with us).



Leon feeds off shrieking merrow with his Orb-powered dagger-spell prowess.





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practice. Offline. Because when you play Inside Pitch 2003, the only baseball game on Xbox Live, you're playing the best.



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Fans needn't worry about a repeat of *Symphony of the Night*'s groanworthy writing and acting. "That wasn't my fault!" exclaims Iga. "I was told that the game wasn't going to be dubbed, but then they changed their minds and we had to do it really quickly here in Japan." He proceeds to mimic awfully acted lines like "Who are you?"

But if you're wishing for an Xbox or GameCube version of *Lament*, don't get your blood pressure up. "I chose to make the game for the PS2 simply because it has the most users," says Iga. And since he's spent so much time building this PS2 sand castle, he's not interested in moving to another console's beach. That doesn't

**"I chose to make the game for the PS2 simply because it has the most users."**

*Castlevania Producer Koji Iga*

and promises never to let acting like that happen again.

#### Not the last bite

Iga's explanation of *Castlevania*'s continued appeal is simple: "Foremost, it's the gameplay that draws people to the series, but the cool vampire mythos and excellent music help." He's definitely covered those bases while crafting this PS2 re-introduction to the classic series, and it should get both hardcore fans' and newcomers' blood boiling this fall.

mean Iga is through remodeling the halls of *Castlevania*, though—not even close. He admits that scads of plot concepts still lurk in his mind, and laughs that "as long as this one sells a lot of copies," we won't have to wait another six years for his next big-console groundbreaking of *Castlevania*. **EW**

Don't forget to check out [www.egm-mag.com](http://www.egm-mag.com) for even more exclusive *Castlevania* content, including full interviews with the developers, a handy series timeline and a gorgeous downloadable desktop wallpaper image.



For such an evil guy, Braza's sure has quite an elegant church built inside of his house. What a task.

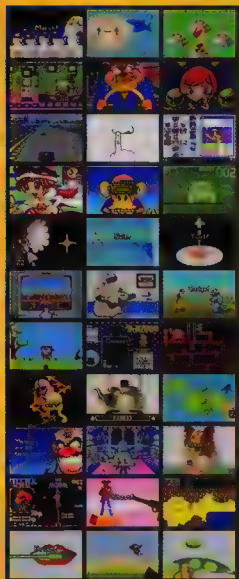
#### digging too deep

##### EMBARRASSING MOMENTS IN CASTLEVANIA HISTORY



##### FRED ASKARE AND PAULA ADENIOL

We're still not sure who's responsible for naming this ghostly walking duo from *Super Castlevania IV* (Super Nintendo), but we know that we hate them. We take our *Castlevania* games pretty seriously, and we don't ever want to be interrupted by thoughts of the St. Kat from the "Discoless Attract" video.



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Comic Mischief





# review crew

Your monthly guide to gaming's winners and losers

## THE RATING SYSTEM

Each reviewer assigns an overall grade to each game, on a scale from 0 to 10. When a game receives a 10, you can rest assured that it's one of the best games ever made, a classic that will endure throughout the ages. Conversely, when a game gets a 0.0, it's complete and utter crap and should be treated like a deadly biohazard. We utilize the entire scale, so a game that gets a 5.0 is average, not bad. **We repeat: 5.0 IS AVERAGE.** The scores are now color-coded, so the brighter the reds, the better the game.

5.0-6.5  
FAIR

7.0-10  
GOOD

## OUR AWARDS



**Platinum Awards** go to games that got all 10s, the ultimate review a game can get.



**Gold Awards** go to games with an average score of 9.0 or higher. Quality stuff.



**Silver Awards** go to games that average at least an 8.0 (but are lower than 9.0).



This honor is bestowed upon the highest-reviewed game each month. A worthy buy.



This dishonor goes to the worst game each month that gets unanimously bad scores.

### ESRB KEY (Also check out [www.esrb.com](http://www.esrb.com))

**EC-Early Childhood:** Games bearing this mark are suited for infants, toddlers, and preschool.

**E-Everyone:** Win-win-win-win-win. These games feature mild violence, blood, and/or sexual innuendo.

**T-Teen:** Like PG-13 movies, these games feature mild violence and "sexual innuendo."

**M-Mature:** Warning: These games offer all the gore, sex, drugs, and fun of EC-rated fare.

**AO-Adults Only:** A rare find. We haven't seen an AO game since *House of the Dead* on the SGB.

## GAME OF THE MONTH



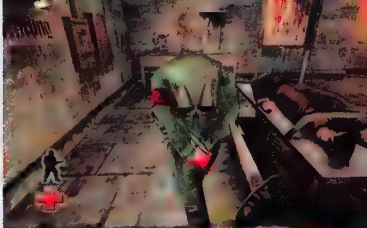
■ PAGE 116

## PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EPISODE I & II

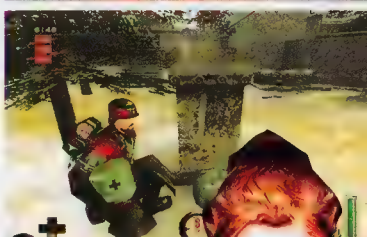
Sure, we already smote about 45,000 Rag Rappies in the last three versions of PSO, but the addition of Xbox Live voice chat has us enthralled by this awesome online RPG all over again.

## directory

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- 122 Bloody Roar Extreme
- 123 Dragon Ball Z: Legendary Super Saiam



■ Other weapons may have longer range, but then, they don't make your foes run around on fire.



■ If you have to shoot Nazis, might as well make them statuesque, leather-clad, high-heeled female Nazis, right? That's all we're saying, ya know?







The two-player spiltscreen ain't quite *Halo*-smooth, but it's still a blast.



■ These after-school specials were right—cooperation really is fun!

■ Xbox / Also On: PlayStation 2

ONLINE

# RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR

Mein Lieben! This is what you bought Xbox Live for

**PAUL:** Europe, 1943. The Nazis' research on the occult yields an unstoppable army of zombies, gun-toting robo-hounds, and lightning-handed priests wearing stylish velvet robes. But undead soldiers can't mend the chink in the Nazis' Aryan armor—ein Amerikaner with a surfeit of mookie can bring down the whole shebang. Like *Wolfenstein 3D* (PC), its old-school namesake, *Tides* challenges players with enemies' toughness and sheer numbers rather than clever artificial intelligence. Be prepared for lots of trial and error.

The story is compelling, but it's not actually integrated into gameplay. You need to read your journal to figure out where you are, what you're doing, and why you're throwing so many damn switches. Still, aside from some frustrating moments, the single-player campaign is well-paced and entertaining.

*Tides* is even better with a partner. In Cooperative mode, progress comes at a steady clip and with fewer do-overs. Different play styles are an advantage: Shawn's precise sniping paved our

way forward while my berserker spaz-outputs saved our bacon from Nazi ambushes. That's synergy! And if you think hooking up with one comrade is fun, try blasting with 15 real people—*Tides* is an absolute blast on Xbox Live. Team members of all four classes must coordinate their efforts to succeed in the superb objective-based scenarios. If any element is lacking (e.g., no lieutenant, poor communication), you'll lose and deserve it. But when your team comes together, victory is sweet.

**SHAWN:** Don't fret if you prefer your shooters on the serious side—*Tides* isn't all mecha-Nazis and walking cadavers. The forces you'll face in its excellent online mode are firmly rooted in reality. And fighting on these richly detailed multiplayer maps makes it all worthwhile. An amphibious assault on a fortified seaway is infinitely more engrossing against live targets. When a silent slug hurls your squadmate into the concertina wire, you lament his loss—and feel perversely satisfied

when you incinerate the responsible sniper. Add objectives that elevate matches above banal blood-baths, like seizing Nazi strongholds and extracting encrypted documents, and you've got a game that is, at least in part, better than *Halo*.

**MARK:** Despite its occasionally confusing level layouts you'll often wander around looking for newly opened doors), single-player *Tides* offers a rock-solid game of good ol' fashioned Nazi-killin': satisfying weapons, natural—and very customizable—controls, and objectives that make your straightforward tasks (often just "find the switch") somehow seem more exciting. But we all agree that what elevates this *Wolf* above the FPS pack is its online aspect. The different playable characters and match types give multiplayer a unique emphasis on teamwork that's a perfect match for Xbox Live's voice-chat capability. Sure, I wish the graphics were a bit more detailed, but I'm having too much fun storming Nazi beach strongholds to really care.



**Zombie Revenge:** Years ago we mocked hermit-rockin' Rob Zombie and his song "Dragula" for being on so many game soundtracks. Now his grizzled likeness appears in *Wolf* games in one month, first as a dead-ringer for the final *Wolf* boss above, and later in *Wolf* (page 120). Which brings us to the inevitable question, "Why does God love us so?"

## Soldier needs ammo...badly

Online, you'll select one of these classes. Each one has special abilities to support your teammates.

**Soldier:** The heart of any fighting unit, he wields the biggest guns.



**Lieutenant:** He dispenses ammo and calls in airstrikes.



**Medic:** Dr. Pain heals himself over time and revives fallen comrades.



**Engineer:** Need something exploded? Repaired? Here's your guy.



■ Sniping online can be tricky (since even slight lag can throw off your shots), but offline, it's pure bliss.

**Good:** Xbox Live-enabled multiplayer  
**Bad:** Surprise! Another ambush  
**Wanted From Our History Books:** Sexy Nazi commandos



PAUL

8.5

SHAWN

9.5

MARK

8.5

Publisher: Activision  
Developer: Nerve Software/Id Software  
Players: 1 (2 Co-op, 2-16 online)  
ESRB: Mature

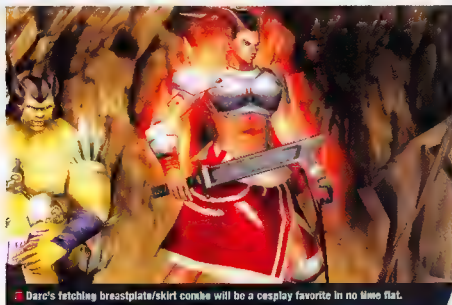
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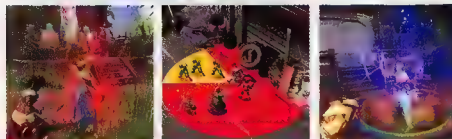
PlayStation 2 Also On: Xbox

# ARC THE LAD: TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS

Not exactly a lad, but not quite a man, either



Darc's fetching breastplate/skirt combo will be a cosplay favorite in no time flat.



(Center) No squares or hexes here—you're free to run wherever you choose during combat.

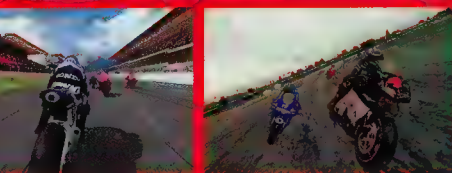
ONLINE Xbox / Also On: None

# MOTOGP 2

Kinda like the first one—but that's good



Bike and rider details, like sponsorship patches and stickers, are now much sharper.



► Sprint races are the only two types of races you can play online.

► If you're a fan of the game, you'll love the new game mode.

**Good:** Cool intersecting story lines  
**Bad:** Roller-coaster difficulty level  
**At least it's not:** Six years old and \$70 like *Arc* collector (PST)



**GREG S:** I thought the first three *Arc* role-playing games were mediocre, and this one's only marginally better. The old game's pseudostrategy battles normally degraded into surrounding an enemy and hacking away until it died. Sadly, *Twilight*'s combat suffers from the exact same problem, but with the added bonus of crazy, uneven difficulty. Once in a while the game dishes up a particularly crucial battle that requires you to defeat multiple foes with one guy or protect self-destructive characters from harm. These skirmishes, while cool from a plot standpoint, screw up the difficulty curve and game progression, often requiring three or four replays to be successful.

But if you can deal with the severe challenge (and I know some people will), *Arc*'s story is surprisingly cool. You divide your time playing as two separated-at-birth brothers who are drawn together by fate, and it's a neat payoff to merge their disparate tales. Also, plenty of subtle references to previous *Arc* games will surely please series fans. Overall, *Twilight* is a serviceable RPG, just not a great one.

**SHANE:** I'm not sure why Greg has such a hate-on for the *Arc* franchise. I think he's being a little rough on *Twilight*. I feel the combat is unique and fun—you're not limited to moving on a grid, allowing fluid, free-form strategy. And while it's true that some battles are indeed hard, I never found 'em frustrating. He's right about the parallel-perspective plot, though: It's absolutely engaging. This 40-hour quest could've really used a few legitimate dungeons to explore, but the narrative and combat alone kept me hooked.

## OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAG—SAM:

While I have to agree with Greg about the occasional tricky battles, I guess they don't bother me as much. And I certainly don't think he's giving enough credit to the combat—there's lots of strategy involved. *Arc* had me surprisingly captivated throughout. Mainly because of the interesting story and characters, but also because of the solid graphics and wonderful music. It may not be perfect, but it is the perfect RPG escape for these long summer months.

GREG S.	SHANE	SAM
6.0	7.0	8.0

Publisher: Sony CEA  
Developer: Cattle Call  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Teen

[www.gamers.com/1342649](http://www.gamers.com/1342649)

**Good:** 16-player Xbox Live racing furor  
**Bad:** Beginners, good luck keeping the bike on the track  
**New for the Fashionable Racer:** Custom-designed leathers



**DEMIAN:** If you've played THQ's previous *MotoGP* game—not to be confused with Namco's PS2 series bearing the same name—don't expect any revelatory surprises from *MotoGP 2*. It has six new tracks and an updated roster of cycles and drivers from the 2002 MotoGP season, perhaps the most noticeable change is bikes that no longer sound like 180 mph speed whackers. So that's a plus. Other entries in the "new for '03" column: slightly rejiggered game modes (a Stunt mode replaces Arcade), an extra difficulty level, three challenges on each track that, if completed, improve your rider; adjustable power-slide sensitivity.

The tracks are slight, but not a waste of needed time. *MotoGP 2* remains an intense, unforgiving, but ultimately satisfying racing sim—and the only one of its kind you can play online. While the server weren't exactly bumping when we hit the track (before the game's on-sale date), we expect the same excellent racing experience the original delivered—but with a few tweaks. Thanks to online racing, we

placed walls that make on-rails racing look impossible. Thanks to the new game mode, we can play as much the same game as the first *MotoGP* for Xbox. But since that was my favorite motorcycle racer, it's fine by me. I love how it rewards mastery: Once you learn how to set up for each turn and master front and rear brakes, your lap times will drop dramatically. A high level of rider customization and goodly amount of contribute points to be earned mean your playing becomes the game's entire.

**RYAN:** Presumably a superb graphics upgrade then *Demian* or *Greg*, but I enjoyed *MotoGP 2* all the same. The photorealistic visuals look amazing, and the Career mode's stunt modes continually reward you with new bikes, riders, tracks, and wacky unlockables (like changing the game's looks with cartoon shading). Aside from the lack of a true tutorial to ease newcomers into the demanding, sometimes frustrating, and exciting world of motorcycle racing.

DEMIAN	GREG S.	RYAN
8.5	8.0	8.0

Developer: Gametech  
Players: 1-4 (3-4 online)  
ESRB: Everyone



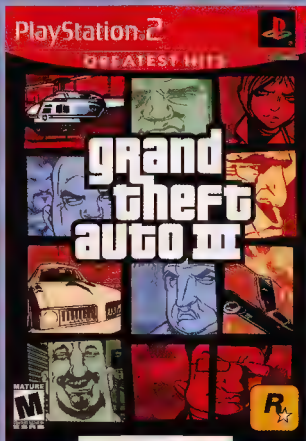
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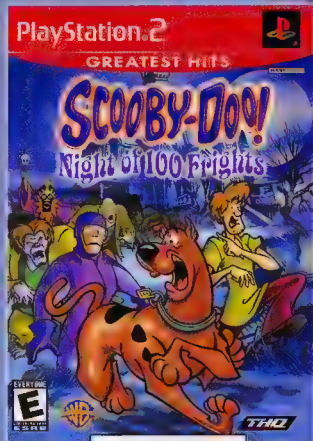
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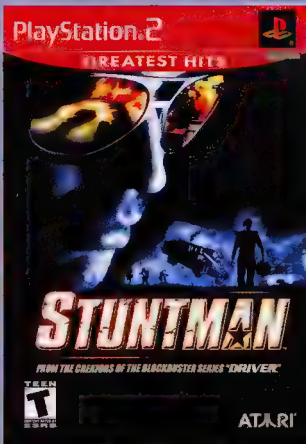
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Sparkly stars and pink triangles didn't even faze us after 150 hours of Saga pain.

PlayStation 2 / Also On: None

## UNLIMITED SAGA

Unlimited frustration, tedium, and anger

**Good:** The music, the intro movie, and the FMV of goodness.  
**Bad:** Fantastically awful gameplay  
**Might Appeal to Fans of:** Watercolor paintings or flowers

**JOHN R:** The *Saga* series has always had a reputation for being a little different, with its extremely nonlinear stories and unorthodox role-playing. Over the years the games have become progressively stranger, but nothing could've prepared anyone for this latest installment. To be perfectly frank, this game sucks.

*Unlimited Saga* exemplifies everything that's wrong with RPGs today and throws it all together in one deluxe package for all to avoid like the plague.

For starters, exploration in *Saga* is boring as hell. Towns consist of one screen with a bunch of menus to navigate, while dungeons involve you moving your character one space at a time around a giant board. Thrilling, eh? Battles are far too random and tedious to be even remotely enjoyable, which is a serious problem considering how often you fight. And the graphics are terrible. Nearly every area in *Saga* looks like a cheap painting, and the characters animate like castaways from the 16-bit era. If you crave something really different, or your name is Seanbaby, by all means, give this a rent.



**SHANE:** Few games have raised such a hateful ire in me. *Saga* is so fundamentally flawed that it's ridiculous. I'm all for experimenting with new role-playing concepts, but uh, I like to walk in my RPGs. Sorry, moving my party like a *Monopoly* token through ugly metadungeons isn't fun gameplay. The uninteresting narratives, damnable difficulty, and mediocre graphics only drag it further down. A beautiful soundtrack and creative battle system rise to the surface of the cesspool, but it's still a lost cause.

**OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAG—GARY:**

Wow...this pig of a game ain't fun at all—and really, that's all that counts. *Saga* is a lot like playing a pen-and-paper RPG using a board game as your map, with the most arbitrary, cruel, and spiteful dungeon master ever. Yet I respect Square for what it's trying to accomplish: This is a bold experiment that ultimately fails, but it fails brilliantly. Rent it once, just to experience something different. As a side effect, you'll probably appreciate traditional RPGs like *Final Fantasy* even more.



PlayStation 2 / Also On: Xbox, Game Boy Advance

## WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED

Whatboarding?



Wakeboarding is not a crime. Grinding cultural treasures, however, is.

**Good:** Ingenious level design

**Bad:** Too similar to *Tony Hawk* for some  
**Kountry Kerner:** Dueling Banjos attack challenge



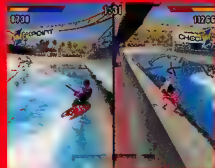
**SHAWN:** Set aside your extreme-sports snobbery for a second and *Murray* may actually appeal to you. Imaginative challenges, like leading a captive orca to the open sea and ferrying stranded livestock to safety, complement the first-rate water effects. Of course, even immaculately rendered H<sub>2</sub>O can get monotonous, but look at the screens on this page and you'll see that *Murray* rides more than wakes.

To reach the riverside houses and castles bracketing the banks, though, you have to part with the horsepower that pulls you. And therein lies one clever-as-hell catch: When you release your towline you lose momentum. To avoid being stranded and forfeiting accumulated combos, you have to reconnect to your towline by getting your waterlogged ass back in your boat. Ending your off-the-leash antics with a coordinated rope catch gives your combos a sense of stone-solid completion you won't find anywhere else.

**JENNIFER:** This game goes so far beyond creativity whatsoever (no, discovering yet another sport to exploit with the footpedal *Tony Hawk* formula doesn't count). The said *Murray* is loads of fun and provides just twilchy instant gratification every well-implemented action-sports title should. Like Shawn, I discovered a new sense of possibility once I learned how he manipulates the physics of that boat-rope combo, and the multiplayer co-op mode—where one player drives the boat—is way cool. It may be just another *Pro-Extreme* (but so, really, must come before, but

that ain't necessarily so).

**JOHN:** I've been an extreme-sports surfer since I was 10, but damn it, this wakeboarding nonsense isn't fun. *Hawk* and *Hoffman* experience has been mostly limited to yelling, "Quit grinding my nails, ya punk kid!" so this *Hawk*-derived gameplay is fresh to me. Messing with the boat's towrope opens the trick book way the hell up, and I had a blast coming up with my own unique towline maneuvers. Landing the right tricks in complete stages did present a serious challenge—extreme wusses like me might want to work on



JOHN R.

SHANE

GARY

2.0

4.0

4.0

Publisher: Square Enix  
 Developer: Square Enix  
 Players: 1  
 ESRB: Teen

www.gamers.com/1192558

SHAWN

JENNIFER

JOHN D.

9.0

8.0

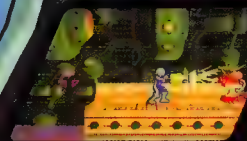
7.5

Developer: Square Enix  
 Players: 1-2  
 ESRB: Everyone

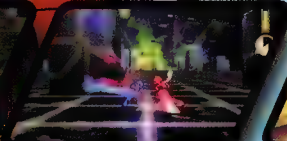


# MEGAMAN NETWORK TRANSMISSION

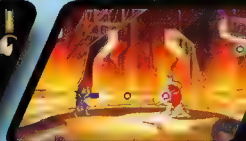
Mega Man's first adventure  
on the Nintendo GameCube™!



Story-line tie-in to the Mega Man Battle Network games.

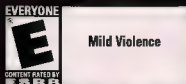


Collect battle chips to use against your enemies & solve puzzles.



Explore a vast, interconnected universe.

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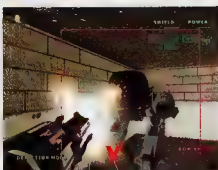
Xbox / Also On: None

# ROBOCOP

Part man. Part machine. All crap



■ We're pretty sure it's illegal to kill bad guys just because they're criminally retarded.



■ (Left) Remember when RoboCop hunted giant rats in pools of milky sludge? Neither do we.

Good: Makes RoboCop 3 seem not-half-bad

Bad: No self-destruct button

Prime Directive: Run from this game



**CRISPIN:** Get Terminator on the blower—his baby-food-guzzling fellow cyborg RoboCop needs an intervention. Of chrome dome's first-person shooter suffers more major malfunctions than an AIBO robo dog run through a dishwasher. It starts with a story—some cliché-factory crud about a drug named BrainDrain—that makes RoboCop 3 seem like...well, RoboCop 1. Then you get the legally insane enemy A.I., putrid visuals, crummy dialogue—the other reviewers will cover these misdemeanors. I'll lock onto the game's felony crime: It's plain ol' poorly assembled. Although the levels are the grimy kind of neo-urban settings we saw in the flicks, they feel slapped together. You just click around for switches and keycards to reach the next area. Some doors open. Some don't. Even with RoboCop's "advanced" sensors (basically a filter that turns your screen blue), I still got lost and resorted to trial and error. And someone really needs to calibrate 'Cop's targeting sensors. He shoots locked-on bad guys exclusively in their 'hads. As if these numskulls didn't have enough grief.

**BRYAN:** If it's RoboCop's duty to serve and protect innocent civilians, then it's mine to protect you from purchasing this doodle. Fifty bucks for what? Mentally handicapped enemies, repetitive mission objectives, and some of the least-intentionally humorous dialogue ever. One look at the pools of stagnant, diluted milk that pass for water and you'll know what to expect visually. And I'm actually glad there's no multiplayer, since I wouldn't wish this pain on anyone else. Avoid this pile and go buy Wolfenstein if you're longing for a new shooter.

**XBN—GREG O:** You have the right to remain silent, dumbfounded at the thought of having spent so much for so little. You have the right to blast endless poorly animated thugs who won't fire upon RoboCop when he's five feet away. You have the right to shoot crates, pull levers, and collect keycards until boredom becomes your new best friend. You have the right to sing the blues and stare at dull, washed-out levels for the duration. If you give up these rights, well, then bully for you.

CRISPIN	BRYAN	GREG O.
2.5	2.5	3.0

Publisher: Thus  
Developer: Thus  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Mature

www.gamers.com/27744



■ Every question by Brad McQuay is answered by Brad McQuay. Brad McQuay is qualified. Brad McQuay.

GameCube / Also On: None

# TUBE SLIDER

Who wants to slide some tube? C'mon, anyone?



■ It's like a water slide...except there's no water, bikinis, or fun.

Good: Vehicles reminiscent of Wacky Races (the cartoon)

Bad: All the other parts

We'd Rather Play: The original Wipeout



**DEMIAN:** Tube Slider takes a cynical view of the future...apparently there's nothing better to do than race homemade jalopies in big tubes at decidedly sensible speed. While other postapocalyptic racers, like Wipeout and F-Zero, try to entice gamers with speed, sharp controls, more speed, and possibly crazy weapons, Tube Slider doesn't go for all that malarkey. It's dog slow, with shallow gameplay and a whole lot of varieties of power-ups (two of which give you a turbo; the third is an energy boost that, uh, allows you to turbo). But hey, it's not forget, it does have tubes.

Tube Slider's main gameplay innovation aside from the tubes, is a tractor beam that siphons energy from racers ahead of you. It works OK and adds a bit of strategy, but it's not worth hanging a game around. A top techno soundtrack and the most bizarre array of game modes (Tutorial, Grand Prix, Versus, and Time Attack) round out the forgettable experience. By the way, the future does turn out to involve tube-based racing, I think I speak for Paul and everyone when I say we'd rather play Wipeout.

**GMR—ANDREW:** Pissed is right. Tube Slider is the NASCAR of the 24th century: boring tracks, boring cars, and boring racing. My biggest problem with it is not knowing where to be on the track for maximum speed—the game obviously encourages tube sliding, so why can't I use the whole tube? And what good is the energy-jacking system when you're rarely close enough to someone for it to work? After experiencing the genre evolution that is Tube Slider, your's truly F-Zero'd back home before.

**PAUL:** Begin with a speed boost, then the varied terrain, all the weapons, the "humph" soundtrack, and its ships' comical plasma-trail exhaust. Replace them with turbo-stealing system that doesn't work very well, an eye-straining mishmash of backgrounds, and A.I. drivers who behave like bellicose fatboys in a mosh pit. Just for good measure, throw in some weak techno and questionable physics. Roll the whole mess into a tube and give it a name that inspires juvenile innuendo.

Congratulations, you've created a bad game.

DEMIAN	ANDREW	PAUL
5	5	5.0

Publisher: Thus  
Developer: Thus  
Players: 1-4  
ESRB: Everyone





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PlayStation 2







Arola lays down the law with twin peacekeepers for one Devil May Cry-ish level.

PlayStation 2 / Also On: None

# CHAOS LEGION

Rally a band of otherworldly brothers

**Good:** Building up your Legion adds depth.  
**Bad:** Too few enemy types makes it repetitive.  
**Sickest Androgynous Character:** Delacroix



**SHAWN:** At first glance, *Chaos Legion* looks suspiciously like its hack-and-slash Capcom cousin, *Devil May Cry*. But in reality, it plays like a tactical strategy game that places you in near-complete control of units rather than having you issue orders with icons and cursors.

Commanding an entourage of supernatural soldiers is heady but fulfilling work. Some of your minions specialize in combating mechanical creatures, while others fare better against flesh and blood—so to eviscerate the opposition, you'll need to plan accordingly. Factor in artillery and protective units and the potential for strategy is staggering.

Yet because you do all this while controlling your own character, in reality, you'll need the dexterity of *Star Trek's* Data to consistently carry out all your calculations. Luckily, this inherent complexity is more rewarding than frustrating—spearheading your phalanx is always fun, even though enduring the pandemonium is the most you can hope

for at times. And you can always revisit completed levels, both to refine more-graceful approaches and to gain experience points for legion upgrades—which, for me, ranks high on this game's long list of ingenious features.

**JON D:** Damn you, Capcom, for stealing the name of my future death-metal band! But bless your heart for attaching it to a gorgeous, action-laden game worthy of the rulesome name. *Legion* isn't just mindless melees—allies that grow with experience add the strategy and RPG-ish depth that make playtime fun. But my excitement started to deflate a few stages shy of the end. As the button-mashing ramps up near the too-soon climax, the game relentlessly recycles the same enemies and bosses over and over. For the few hours you'll spend, *Legion* has "rental" written all over it—Shawn and I are just easy-to-please gaming newbies, I guess.

**BRYAN:** In addition to its lush visuals, *Legion* excels in two areas where most hack-and-slashers don't. First, it provides an engaging story (told through beautiful cut-scenes) that kept me on my toes till the very end. Second, as Shawn said, building up each legion's stats keeps the action from feeling monotonous. Sure, some of the dialogue is over-the-top hokey, and the game's *Spawn*-like creature collection could be more diverse—but these are really minor problems. I can only hope a sequel is on the way.



This massive boss changes its form more often than Michael Jackson.

SHAWN	JON D.	BRYAN
8.5	6.5	8.5

Publisher: Capcom  
Developer: Capcom  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Teen

www.gamers.com/151727

GameCube / Also On: None

# ULTIMATE MUSCLE: LEGENDS VS. NEW GENERATION

So much muscle, it's illegal in Uzbekistan



Wally Tuskum is not as lovable and friendly as his name implies.



**Good:** Puts every WWE title's gameplay to shame.  
**Bad:** Some might find it too cartoony and simplistic.  
**Best Character Name:** Dik Dik Van Dik

**CJ:** Even though this is wrestling, it's unfair to put *Muscle* in the same ring as WWE games. The slow, plodding, and overly technical style of your run-of-the-mill "wrestlin'" game is gone, replaced by incredibly fast and fun gameplay. The object here isn't to pin your opponent but rather to bust out enough over-the-top moves to KO him flat on the mat. And that isn't a different and welcome enough change, *Muscle's* cool cartoony visuals, whack-ass characters, and absurd plot separate it from the norm even further.

Of course, there are still areas to improve: The Story mode is short, there's no outside-the-ring action, some characters' attacks are way too powerful, and the Create-a-Character mode is low on options. But I've grown so tired of the same old never-changing "aim" wrestling games year after year that playing *Muscle* is like taking that first breath of fresh air after a decade of being trapped in a box with your least-favorite book on Earth.

**BRYAN:** Haha, Hogan, you're short—your days are over. Games like *Muscle* prove the WWE's meathads aren't essential to superior videogame grappling. You won't be disappointed with this game's high-octane pace, simple arcade controls, and flamboyant finishers. But, sorry CJ, not being able to pin opponents, brawl outside the ring, or use weapons lowers me excitement to the middle turnbuckle. Even so, *Muscle* whumps *Wrestlemania X's* ass and clearly challenges *Def Jam Fight for NY's* championship title.

**SHAWN:** It neither stars nor Jeremy Jarrold's your wang, but *Ultimate Muscle* makes for a satisfying weekend nonetheless. And don't let the cutesy tone deter you; after all, WWE wrestlers wear their seriousness on their Technicolor codpieces, too. But I'll take *Muscle's* simple, no-nonsense gameplay over the painfully slow plodding of true-to-life alternatives any day. Like the lighthearted rumbles of decades past, it's instantly accessible and satisfyingly fast. Simple but effective evasion and countering also offset the limited move lists, and *Muscle*'s heads will no longer be the least of your worries.



## Beyond the Mat

You can unlock more characters in Story mode by completing it with each New Generation wrestler. Once you've snagged all of those, though, opening the last few requires you to gather more of the collectible *Muscle* figures by cashing in your winnings. A new wrestler will appear when you've reached 100-, 200-, and 300-figure milestones.

CJ	BRYAN	SHAWN
8.5	7.5	7.5

Publisher: Capcom  
Developer: Capcom  
Players: 1-4  
ESRB: Teen

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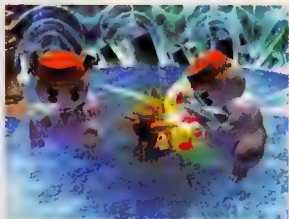
PlayStation 2

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Wario doesn't need fancy-pants water guns to settle his differences—he employs glittering fisticuffs instead.

GameCube / Also On: Game Boy Advance

# WARIO WORLD

## Another Nintendo mega-franchise? Not quite

**G. FORD:** Mario's unscrupulous rival Wario is finally getting his big-time console break, and I'm diggin' it. First off, he's a cool character—Mario's goody-two-shoes antics just aren't connecting with the surly, *Grand Theft Auto*-lovin' kids of today, so a greedy antihero like Wario should be right up their alley. And to inject street cred into this GC debut, Nintendo enlisted the capable action vets at Treasure (makers of *Ikaruga* and the epic *Gunstar Heroes* for Sega Genesis), who've created an inventive, gameplay-rich run-and-jump romp.

As in a Mario game, Wario travels through a wacky 3D world trying to recapture a variety of delightful shiny objects. But this hop-n-bop miscare isn't afraid to brawl, pulverizing enemies with his fists, smashing them with satisfying plectrivers, crushing them with his ample behind, and spinning them dizzy. The fighting system proves easy, responsive, and intuitive, and it delivers tons of fun. Even though most enemies are unremarkable, kicking the crud out of them never is, and it gets even

better during the amazing boss battles.

*Wario World* has a couple flaws, though. Offering only four worlds with two levels in each, the game ends far too soon. An ill-advised Continue system compounds the problem, letting you restart from the exact spot you die for a measly 50 coins (I had more than 25,000 by game's end). Wario delivers a great time while it lasts and is well worth checking out. Just don't expect a Mario-quality adventure.

**CJ:** On the one hand, I like *Wario World*. It feels like an old-school 8-bit Nintendo platformer perfectly remade in 3D. The levels are tight, fast, and fun—less about aimless exploration and more about reflex-testing action. But on the other hand, I'm a little disappointed that it's so short and simplistic, and that it doesn't take more advantage of the GC's hardware. Plus, we hardly get to see a hint of Wario's innately evil personality (or any humor at all, really). That's forgivable in light of the fun gameplay, but the game's length and super-easy

difficulty aren't. *Wario World* could've been great—as it is, it's just good.

**JENNIFER:** I'm with CJ on the cool level design, but that's pretty much it. Wario's mindless punching gets real old real fast. Enemies respawn so quickly—move 10 steps and then double back and you'll generally find the pests back on the attack—that pummeling them gives you no advantage. I liked the first two worlds when I thought of them as a platformer with training wheels—just what the Cube kiddies need, right? Well, sort of. About halfway through, the training wheels come off, and your safe neighborhood street becomes an icy mountain road at night—a perilous journey only the most seasoned jumping-puzzle zealots (like, apparently, G. Ford and CJ) will enjoy. Plus, the fiercely annoying boss battles had me fuming, hurtling away the controller, and shouting expletives at the screen. *WW* might keep you entertained—if you like that sort of self-flagellating frustration.



**Free sample of videocrack:** Owners of a Game Boy Advance will GC-to-GBA link Cable get a neat bonus: a *Wario World* Certain treasures Wario finds allow you to transfer a trial level of the stunningly brilliant *Wario Ware* to your GBA. Well, if you already own *Wario* it's a moot point, but these demos will likely back some new microgamers.

### Fun on a colossal scale

The boss-birthing masters at Treasure deliver a pantheon of mostly awesome end-of-level foes.



Treasure's platform games are renowned for offering plentiful encounters with massive, challenging bosses. *Wario World* doesn't disappoint. Granted, some are less-than-inspired and annoying (like *The Mean Emcee* of level 4-1), but others get pretty intense—like the first world's behemoth, *DinoMighty* (pictured). And unlike in Treasure's bargain-bin *Stretch Panic* for PS2, the levels before each boss are pretty damned fun, too.



**Good:** Classic action-pastry crossover  
**Bad:** Not nearly long enough  
**Snitch:** Replenishes health; repeats the audio



G. FORD

7.5

CJ

7.0

JENNIFER

6.0

Publisher: Nintendo  
Developer: Treasure  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Everyone

www.gamers.com/1153878



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Xbox / Also On: GameCube

ONLINE

# PHANTASY STAR ONLINE: EPISODE I & II

Still addictive, now with voices in your head

**Good:** Voice chat makes this the best *PSO* yet.  
**Bad:** Spitscreen is almost totally useless.  
**Don't Play With:** "EGMshawn" —he's greedy and no fun.



**SHOE:** Mindless, repetitive, pointless story line... yet this action-RPG has managed to keep me enthralled for triple-digit hours' worth of gameplay through four versions now. Am I insane? Perhaps, but *PSO* fills that intrinsic gamer need to level up characters and find better and rarer items. It does this particularly well because of its sick graphics and cooperative online format (as with deathmatch shooters, it's so easy to get hooked when playing with friends). Just be warned that this addiction doesn't come cheap: You have to pony up the bucks for the game, Xbox Live, and a monthly fee (although in true drug-dealer style, Microsoft will give you the first two months free). It's worth it—as opposed to previous *PSOs*, you can voice chat here, which improves cooperative play tenfold. Once you get used to the slight lag, you'll never want to Phantasize with one hand on the keyboard again.

If you won't be going online, pass on *PSO*; spitscreen (with bad camera angles and an incomplete interface) and single-player don't offer the same buzz.

**CJ:** After logging a ton of hours in three prior versions, you'd think I'd be sick of clearing Rago's picturesque forests of Rappies by now. But like the other guys, I find *PSO* so addictive and fun to play that I just can't say no—and this Xbox incarnation is the best yet. Being able to use voice chat instead of stop-and-go typing improves gameplay so much that I require all future online RPGs to offer mic support. *PSO* is precisely the killer app Xbox Live needed. See you online!

**MARK:** To paraphrase Michael Corleone, "Just when I thought I was out of *PSO*, it pulls me back in." With so many ways to customize and improve your character (gain levels; find new armor, weapons, and spells; boost your Mag robot sidekick), this wildly addictive game is once again keeping me up all night—even two years after I first started playing it. Gripes? I have a few: Some graphics still pop into view, and the camera in spitscreen is atrocious. Still, voice chat makes this, by far, the best version of an already amazing experience.



Remind anyone else of *The House of the Dead*?

PlayStation 2 / Also On: None

# RESIDENT EVIL: DEAD AIM

Misses the mark

**Good:** Creepy atmosphere  
**Bad:** Too easy and short  
**Still Way Better Than:** *Resident Evil: Survivor* (PS1)



**MARK:** If there's one area where this *Resident Evil* shooter is right on target, it's atmosphere. The undead shambling in the dim glow of your flashlight (a creepy effect stolen from *Silent Hill*), heads bobbing with eerily realistic animation. Shoot them just right and you'll blast zombies clean off their feet, blood splattering across the floor and walls. You can see why, despite its lack of storage boxes and (unfortunately) any real puzzles, *Dead Aim* has that spooky *Resident Evil* vibe; it's too bad that, as a light-gun shooter, it falls far off the mark. The new stealth aspect—enemies don't attack until you see or hear you—is an interesting idea, but in practice it adds little technique. Actually, along with the fact that you mutated opponents can't open doors or handle stairs, it further encourages sneaking past the bad guys—the most effective and least enjoyable way of playing the game. Other disappointments include noninteractive backgrounds (windows don't even shatter), precious few moments in which aiming or timing is necessary, and little reason for replay (except a playthrough of course, thank you).

**environments?** Nope. The ability to take out zombies' limbs? Not here. Some puzzles, or a two-player mode at least? No. The result? A game that really isn't worth playing.

**INSPIRE:** Shoot, damn it. It's my turn to chime in? Sorry, but the sheer total lack of horror in this survival horror gun game bored me plumb to sleep. I'm not sure what zombie Love Boat Mark was on, because *Dead Aim* cruises ship and water-treatment plant locales are just so...dead. Most of the long corridors and rooms look alike, turning much of the game into an aimbot through a maze full of zombies you can easily troop right past. Of course, you'll get maximum enjoyment if you play with a light gun, but the bosses and story are so damn lame neither that, thank you.



Phantasize a little while a *Resident Evil* game? No, but *Dead Aim* is a *Resident Evil* game? No, but.

**JOHN R:** With all the advances in graphics and technology that we've seen over the years, you'd think Capcom would be able to come up with a light-gun game that involved more than just shooting the same three or four enemies through the same dull, repetitive environment for three hours. *Dead Aim* brings absolutely nothing new to the table. *Resident Evil*

MARK	JOHN R.	CRISPIN
5.0	4.0	4.0

## PerSOnality Check: Here are the types of players you'll encounter online.

Nice Guy Will be your pal and share treasure and money. Great to play with.	Greedy Grabs all the rewards for himself, even if he doesn't need 'em.	Loner Actually role-plays and demands that you stay in character.	Aggro Is just there to bother you. Voice chat is his deadliest weapon.	Waste-of-time Can't play without first getting Fed up. Funny yet sad.	Mouthy Takes care of Mags better than real-life pets. Fears Waste-olds.

SHOE	CJ	MARK
9.0	9.0	9.0

Publisher: Microsoft  
Developer: Sonic Team  
Players: 1-4 (spitscreen or online)  
ESRB: Teen

www.gamers.com/269919





The vile Robotnik returns in the form of a largely nonthreatening pinball target.

■ Game Boy Advance / Also On: None

# SONIC PINBALL PARTY

Sonic + balls + your pocket = party



■ You'll fling your balls through a variety of tables based on the series' most memorable levels.

**Good:** Awesome table variety, satisfying physics.  
**Bad:** Uneven difficulty level.  
**Sonic Team Tease:** Where's the new *Nights* game?



**SHANE:** No videogame can truly re-create the intoxicating mix of flashing lights, satisfying physics, and smoky back-alley sleaze that typifies a real-life arcade pinball experience. So all virtual pinball games should do what *Sonic* does here—sweeten the deal by offering tons of different tables, minigames, and bonus features.

With a handful of unique *Sonic*-themed tables, a few based on *Nights: Into Dreams* (Sega Saturn), and even a wildly fun *Samba de Amigo* (Dreamcast) stage, it's damned near impossible to get bored here. Plus, in addition to the quick thrills of the Arcade mode and the sizzling challenge of the Story mode (beating Metal Sonic requires mad flipper dexterity that John and Jen evidently lack), you can spend the rings you earn in a variety of zany Casinopolis minigames. Still want more goofy distractions? Link up with some friends and engage in fun multiplayer games like *Hockey* and *Hot Potato* (all with only one cartridge, to boot). All told, *Sonic* kept my GBA happily buzzin' through many bus trips and comes highly recommended.

**JOHN R:** It's hard to get terribly excited about new pinball games these days, but of those currently available for GBA, *Sonic Pinball Party* is definitely my top pick. *Sonic's* tables aren't especially innovative, but they do offer quite a bit of variety, and the gameplay is fast-paced and fun. Also, the Story mode makes for a nice touch, though it's too tough, honestly. And serious pinheads may want to lower the volume, as the sound effects are rather disappointing, but everything else in *Sonic* is good to go.

**JENNIFER:** *Sonic* achieves a nice balance: With solid pinball play, it evokes memories of simpler times while still offering up fun little multiplayer gems and surprising unlockable minigames. Also, I truly dug the rockin' music and cool graphics. But I never achieved pinball bliss. The menu interface keeps you from being able to restart new games quickly, and the time limit in some Story mode stages just seems pointless. Nonwizards will be stuck on that second battle for way too long—not fun.

SHANE

8.0

JOHN R.

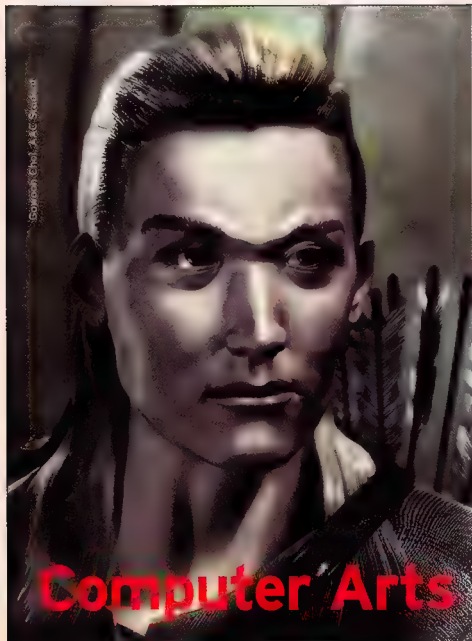
7.5

JENNIFER

7.0

Publisher: Sega  
 Developer: Sonic Team  
 Players: 1-4 Linked  
 ESRB: Everyone

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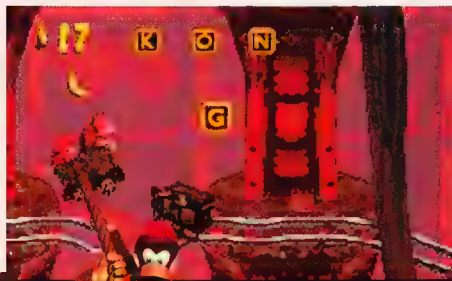
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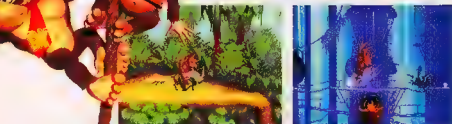
Game Boy Advance Also On: Super NES

# DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

DK's banana horde is looking a little overripe



■ An annoying minicart level? That's spelled F-U-U!



■ These graphics once set the gaming world ablaze. Now, not so much.

**Good:** *Country* fans can revisit this antiquated bestseller.  
**Bad:** This *Donkey*'s characters are far for the big-and-crude.  
**Time Has:** Not been kind to this game's once-rad visuals



**CJ:** When *Donkey Kong Country* first came out on the Super NES nine years ago, everyone (including myself) loved it because of its newfangled "rendered" graphics. But time has made *DKC*'s nostalgic visual effects wear off, and I now see it as an average platformer filled with gimmicky nonsense, collect-a-thon gameplay, and some of the lamest characters ever.

Look at the screenshots here—remember when you thought this looked incredible? The enemies, with their can't-be-more-than-two frames of animation, just look ridiculous now, and the silly-ass bosses are even worse. The gameplay hasn't aged gracefully, either. Most of *DKC*'s levels have some inane, unfun themes, like run-away minicarts or shooting DK out of a barrel. As if the memorization-based gameplay wasn't already annoying, the screen has been cropped to fit the GBA. Now, you'll wrestle with unfair blind jumps and unseen enemies...enough to make you want to throw your GBA at the nearest wall.

My advice: Keep those fond *DKC* memories intact by never playing it again.

**G. FORD:** It's probably better to revisit this *Country* via nostalgic SNES memories than by actually re-playing it. Besides the graphics, which (despite CJ's whining) still look good, the game has not held up well. Sure, the minicart riding and barrel hopping remain mildly fun, but you can only spell "Kong" so many times before the thrill disappears. There's probably enough fun here to warrant one play-through, but only if you've already conquered the comparably timeless *Mario Advances*.

**CRISPIN:** CJ and G. Ford are spanking these monkeys too hard. Yeah, *DKC* is kiddy, has weak bosses, and suffers from mucky stupid character design (although the animation is slick—again, don't listen to CJ). But despite all that, the game offers more variety than the zillion other me-too sidescroilers on GBA. Nearly every level has its own twist—minicarts, swinging vines, baddie-freezing stoplights, etc. It adds up to a fun, challenging time, although the busy backgrounds make play on the backlit GBA SP a must.

CJ	G FORD	CRISPIN
5.0	6.0	7.0

Publisher: Nintendo  
 Developer: Rare/NST  
 Players: 1-2  
 Rating: Everyone

URL: [www.gamers.com/117340](http://www.gamers.com/117340)



PlayStation 2 / Also On: Xbox

# EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK

Proof that videogames do incite violence



■ Asheridam Valien avenges his slain father by attacking waves of retarded zombies.

**Good:** Bruce Campbell's sporadically funny quips  
**Bad:** Sense-bending puzzles  
**Legal Note:** Deemed inhumane for use in POW interrogations



**SHAWN:** Playing *Boomstick* is more exciting than having your sphincter sewn shut and being force-fed prunes. Honestly, I would've paid to not play this game. Counterintuitive puzzles take several hours of a single level but fail to create even the illusion of progress. What seemed to be part of a solution always begets another puzzle in infinite regress until nothing short of a phone call to the game's producer for help can end your agony (we told you not, is what I reported to).

When it comes to venting steam on the decomposing Dearborn townsfolk, you assume a sawed-off shotgun, diamond-toothed chainsaw, and Bruce Campbell's canned one-liners would suffice. Instead, you're repeatedly blindsided and slain by countless cheap shots. And if you did a map one of your limited save tokens, you're back to square "fricken" one. Pointless, retracing steps of ill-conceived puzzles and memorizing out-scenes I couldn't why multiplied my misery. Pay someone who hates you 25¢ to make you hate him back.

**XEN—GREG O:** This stupid, bloody, bizarre, oddly like Gym Sock Surprise—and we like it so you don't have to. Hero Ash, the kick-ass brawler, has been turned into a mere errand boy in the frustrating *Boomstick*. He has to perform numerous fetch quests, but since none of the game's environments has a map, you have no solid idea where to go. Ammo and health packs are limited, too, ensuring *Boomstick* is only suited for either running or running.

**DEMIAN:** I must admit a high degree of believability from my *Evil Dead* games. When a zombified saber-toothed tiger gives up shotgun shells when killed, why the impulse to set the controller down and walk away is irresistible. Shawn and Greg outlined the game's major faults—but I've to keep a little more score on the combat system. Who needs combos or special moves? Not us, apparently. It's more fun to run away, attack briefly, and then run again. Not even Ash's signifi-

SHAWN	GREG O.	DEMIAN
2.0	2.0	3.0

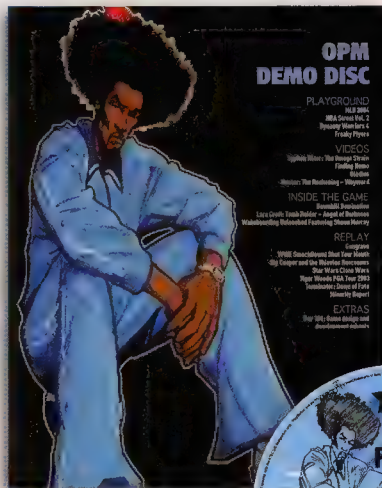
Developer: Raven  
 Players: 1  
 Rating: Adults



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- MLB 2004
- NBA STREET VOL. 2
- DYNASTY WARRIORS 4
- FREAKY FLYERS

#### REPLAY

- GUNGRAVE
- WWE SMACKDOWN!
- SHUT YOUR MOUTH
- SLY COOPER AND THE THIEVIUS RACCOONUS
- STAR WARS CLONE WARS
- TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003
- TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE
- MINORITY REPORT

#### INSIDE THE GAME

- INSIDE THE GAME
- DOWNHILL DOMINATION
- LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER-ANGEL OF DARKNESS
- WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED FEATURING SHAUN MURRAY

#### EXTRAS

- DEV 101: GAME DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS

#### VIDEOS

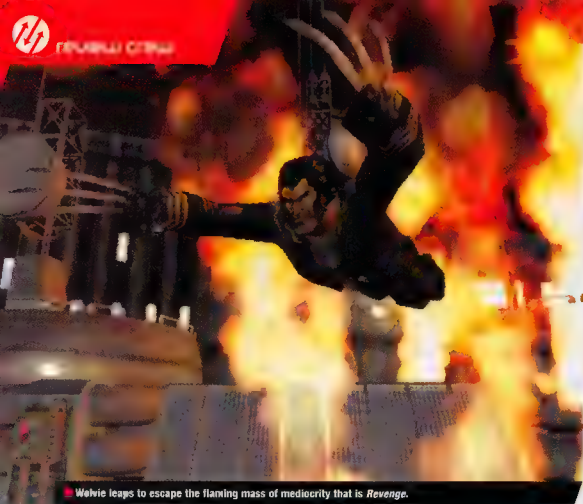
- SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN
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 **PlayStation**  
MAGAZINE





Wolverine leaps to escape the flaming mass of mediocrity that is *Revenge*.



Logan attacks Lady Deathstrike in a fit of madhouse fury.

PlayStation 2 / Also On: Xbox, GC

# X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

A slight cut above most steaming coils of comic-book-based crap

**SHAWN:** If as a kid you used kitchen utensils to pantomime Logan's claw strikes, you're in for some bittersweet gaming. No other *X-Men* game so fully realizes the Canuckhead's many talents or captures the character's essential badassness as well as *Revenge* does. I rarely tire of springing from the shadows to disembowel unwary watchmen. And while most of the levels are set in a visually drab military complex, there's enough diversity in their design to keep things exciting.

But several problems keep *Revenge* from being a stellar action game instead of a semisolid use of licensed material. The boss battles epitomize most of the game's shortcomings: It's obvious that butchering superfoes was meant to require improvisation, yet the correct approach always feels contrived, such as impaling Sabertooth midleap. And long after you identify your adversary's weakness, you'll keep combating uncooperative controls, continue after continue, before claiming victory. The same quality-control prob-

lems carry over to the stealth missions—there's rarely more than a single intended path to circumvent booby traps, and shadow kills, though rewarded, are only sporadically necessary. When secrecy is a must, the stodgy A.I. insists you follow its hard-and-fast rules rather than showing any real creativity. He may be the best there is at what he does, but Wolverine still has a few gaming lessons to learn.

**OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAG—CHRIS B:** It's a good thing I don't have adamantium claws myself—there's a good chance they'd have taken out a few controllers as I played *Revenge*. This game is tough...but usually for the wrong reasons. I can't help feeling I would have had a much easier time getting through it if the shoddy control—especially noticeable during boss fights—had received a little more attention. What's with making me awkwardly hold down L2 to stay in Stealth mode? Also, while the game looks all

right, the environments lack detail. Despite these shortcomings, I still had a genuinely good time playing as one of my comic-book heroes—but it's by no means a great game. Logan's diehard followers should give it a rental.

**JOE:** A comic fan couldn't ask for a better story line or cast of characters in a Wolverine game, but unlike Chris, I wouldn't even recommend *Revenge* as a rental. It's unnaturally hard, with save points so few and far between, you'll definitely relate to Wolverine when he goes into a Berserker Rage. I'm a pretty even-tempered cat, but I came close to eviscerating my television several times—it's that frustrating. I was even forced to replay a half-hour stretch of the game six times. Unfun.

There are good ideas behind Wolverine's stealthy gameplay, but his mutant powers are poorly implemented and the game camera will simply slay you. Don't be fooled by its excellent production values—it's just beautiful junk.



**Boss Battle Catharsis:** Each boss fight is more infuriating than the last, but we guarantee that after dueling his cheap ass, you'll want to buy a Sabertooth action figure—just so you can force-feed it to a garbage disposal. Give yourself an hour of tedious trial and error by executing a Strike move as he leaps at you.

## X-Men Xtras

There are plenty of unlockables to keep patient gamers playing. Here's some of the sweeter swag.



**Strike Attacks:** Quiet kills earn you dog tags. Grab 10 tags to learn a new combo.



**Costumes:** Search the levels for costumes from Wolverine's classic wardrobe.



**Cerebro:** You can also uncover entries in Xavier's mutant encyclopedia.



The lurking Wolverine head near the health pack means you're in enemy range. Guest star Rick Zombro on the scene right when you're too pleased, either.

**Good:** Explores Wolverine's often overlooked talents.  
**Bad:** Bothersome boss battles.  
**Lady Deathstrike:** Ain't half as evil as she looks in movie treatments.



SHAWN

5.5

CHRIS B.

5.5

JOE

4.0

PUBLISHER: Activision  
 DEVELOPER: Genepool/Warthing  
 PLAYERS: 1  
 ESRB: Teen

www.gamers.com/97728





■ If you think this racing looks sweet, imagine doing it to a Manowar soundtrack!

■ Xbox / Also On: PlayStation 2 GameCube

ONLINE

## BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT

Creating 20-car pileups for fun and profit

**Good:** Risk/reward gameplay  
**Bad:** No licensed cars  
**The Core Fan:** Sunday drivers



**G. FORD:** Reviewing *Burnout 2* for GameCube last month, I got my first taste of the series and was totally blown away. I've always enjoyed good arcade racers (with fond memories of *SF Rush* for N64), and *Burnout 2* is this generation's king. It jump-starts the genre with a vicious kick to the teeth—an ingenious risk/reward system that gives you boosts for pulling stunts like dodging traffic, catching air, and drifting.

Xboxers luck out with the most polished *Burnout* yet, and a handful of thoughtful tweaks will inspire envy in PS2 and GC vets. On the other consoles, after unlocking three cars or so, you earn a practically maxed-out car, giving you no incentive to use weaker unlockables. Now, new cars gradually improve in various areas, so you'll actually want to check out each successive ride. The other big improvement: music. This Xbox revision gives you a wider soundtrack selection (some are at least bearable, if not enjoyable). Plus, you can play your own tunes into the game. In all, this is the best version of an already addictive experience.

**BRYAN:** Shame on me for waiting so long to try out this glorious racer. *Burnout 2*'s kamikaze driving had me hooked—I couldn't stop until I'd unlocked every vehicle and course in the single-player campaign. Multiplayer is also a blast, and the Crash minigames are superaddictive. The Xbox Live score-ranking feature is barely worth mentioning, though. Hopefully, a sequel will offer real online action (and licensed cars). Wish list aside, if Ford's comments and mine don't convince you to play *Burnout 2*, then shame on you.

**PAUL:** *Burnout 2* will thrill lead-footed gamers with its awesome boost system and wicked sense of speed. It's a great game with some rough edges, like occasionally rubbery physics and an irritating parade of recap screens after every damn race. Unlike G. Ford, I think the car selection remains weak: There's always one ride that clearly trumps the rest. Music doesn't really affect gameplay, but the Xbox's ability to play the Pixies (or even Poison) while you compete is a nice addition to this swift arcade racer.



G. FORD

8.5

BRYAN

8.5

PAUL

7.5

Publisher: Acclaim  
Developer: Criterion Games  
Players: 1-4  
ESRB: Everyone

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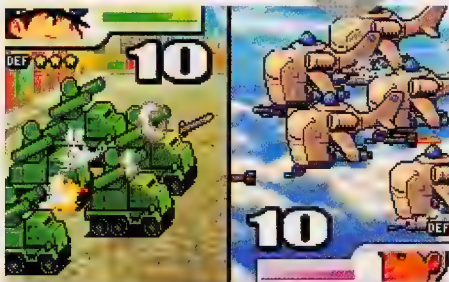
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■ Game Boy Advance / Also On: None

# ADVANCE WARS 2: BLACK HOLE RISING

War: Who is it good for?



■ The classic Army vs. Air Force rivalry gets out of hand sometimes.



■ (Left) Some levels let you fire wide-area missiles. (Right) Scope out your stylish user-created map.

**Good:** The Campaign mode now has much more variety.  
**Bad:** Basic gameplay has hardly changed.  
**Hardware:** This final continent. Newbies need not cringe.



**SHOE:** This war is one helluva mixed bag. Veterans from the first *AW* will be a little disappointed that the designers poured all of their energy into making the Campaign mode more interesting, and almost none into making new units, which would greatly spice up the gameplay. How hard would it have been to rip off ideas from any other strategy title, like borrowing tanks or demolition crews? As it is, the déjà vu in *AW2* hits you like a 40-megaton bomb. Even the new walking-tank unit and super-powers don't freshen up the experience. Is *AW2* meant more for first timers, then?

Luckily, that Campaign mode is one fantastic peace offering. Fans will dig the insane variety—from explosive volcanoes to objectives involving pocket-sized weapons of mass destruction, and more. The later stages are tough, though—so tough that you really have to play through them with the exact strategic plan the designers had in mind; you almost feel like a rat in a brain-slumping maze. Halfway through *AW2*, nonhardcore players will give up and go AWOL.

**BRYAN:** Shoe's dead-on about how little has changed from the first *AW*. The sequel packs the same simple visuals and strategy system, but I think the rewarding gameplay's even better this time around. Trust me when I say you'll work your noodle overtime commanding troops and plotting the best routes to seize enemy bases. Diverse mission objectives spice up solo play, and challenging (and usually losing to) strategy gurus like Shoe in multiplayer still rocks. Military analysts predict that *AW2* is about to invade my personal GBA library.

**JOE:** If you loved *Advance Wars*, you need to play *Advance Wars 2*, and if you missed the last game, this is a great place to start. It's incredibly fun and superaddictive. Be warned, though, it's *hard*. And I mean hard to the point where if you make one wrong move, it might be best just to start a round completely over. Still, it's very worth the serious time and effort you'll invest plowing through its tactical depths. Just be prepared to ignore work, school, and loved ones for awhile. A long while.

SHOE	BRYAN	JOE
8.0	8.0	8.5

Publisher: Nintendo  
Developer: Intelligent Systems  
Players: 1-4 (Link or Hot Seat)  
ESRB: Everyone

www.gamers.com/1294626



■ *Bloody Roar Extreme* has a lot of things to offer, but the character classes are a pain.

■ Xbox / Also On: GameCube

# BLOODY ROAR EXTREME

This ailing beast needs a trip to the vet



■ Images courtesy of the Fox network's *When Animals Attack!*

**Good:** Puffin-tastic characters are so bad they're good.  
**Bad:** Jenny the Bat is naughty.  
**Still Better Than:** *Kakuto Chojin*



**PAUL:** Contrary to its name, *Bloody Roar Extreme* is anemic, mewling, and mild. In the series' previous games, fighters begin as humans and transform into beasts midbout to tear each other apart with claws and fangs. That notion could make a fine fighter, but *BRX* is evasive of stylistic and technical failings.

First off, you'll find a particularly more embarrassing crew of brawlers here. The Chameleon, Rabbit, and Cat-girl look downright ridiculous next to more toothsome competitors like the Wolf and Lion, and why include losers like the Mole and the Insect before nature's better fighters? Laughable characters aside, this game just ain't fun. It's so simple that even veteran players fare better pounding on button than trying to execute combo reversals. I had *Karate Champ* (NES) washbacks when my characters refused to face their opponents. The lack of moves lists in Training mode, absurdly cheap AI opponents, and dull arenas make *BRX* harder to enjoy. Even the tykes for whom it's intended should avoid this shambles.

**SHAWN:** Why visit this unaccredited zoo of mediocrity when you can get more satisfying thrills from the non-furry stars of *DOA3* or the upcoming *Soul Calibur II*? *BRX*'s creaky critters are so sloppy that strategy isn't—pecking a single button produces seven-hit strings, shoddy sidestepping results in beasts that bare more back than wing, and throws skip jarringly into preset cut-scenes. You can't expect studied grins from animals, but where's the ferocity and guile? *Bloody Roar*'s keepers best clean this cage quick if they want any viewing.

**WARMACHINE —JOSHUA-X:** I'd like to see peace in the world of beasts, but *BRX* is something else entirely. Its goofy characters and lackluster environments pale compared to those in other Xbox fighters. And the single button mashing combat mocks the natural ferocity, grace, and patience that real-life animal friends once channeled into very deadly mantle stance. Infected by *BRX*'s mediocrity, I now move in lame, predictable ways, and require months of medication to resist any return.

PAUL	SHAWN	SUSHI-X
5.0	5.0	5.0

Publisher: Fox  
Developer: Hudson  
Players: 1-4  
ESRB: Everyone

www.gamers.com/1294626



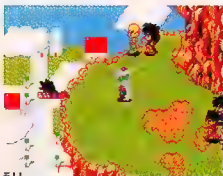


Gohan henes his martial arts skills against a dastardly band of wild bears and snakes.

■ Game Boy Advance / Also On: None

## DRAGON BALL Z: LEGACY OF GOKU II

More of the same, if you know what I'm Saiyan



■ (Left) Saddened by our mediocre reviews of his new adventure, Goku jumps off a cliff.



**Good:** Play as five of the most popular DBZ characters  
**Bad:** Too much random wandering and boring battles  
**Covers like:** Trunks, Android, and Cell sagas



**CJ:** Like its predecessor, *Legacy of Goku II* has a lot going for it—impressive visuals, a decent soundtrack, and boatloads of beloved DB characters that will no doubt endear it to the Z hardcore. But underneath the surface, it suffers from a few annoying problems. For starters, while this is a longer quest than the original *Legacy*, its length is mostly due to having to level up via lots of repetitive, random battles. Would a Saiyan warrior like Piccolo really spend half an hour killing woodland creatures to gain experience? I don't think so. And the combat stinks—attacks often look like they're striking the air, yet they still somehow manage to connect. Bah! Padding out the gameplay even further is a boatload of fetch quests, like the unbelievably complicated task of getting Gohan past a crowd of people, which involves finding a sandwich, a newspaper, an antique record, and a crashed school bus in order to start a parade. Hey, wait...couldn't Gohan just, ya know, fly over? Unless you're a huge DBZ fan already, you'll probably want to skip this *Legacy*.

**SHAWN:** Why are Super Saiyans running endless errands for every schmuck they encounter? Every minute squandered fetching autographs and snack food is time I could've spent saving the world. And if I really do possess the power to annihilate whole planets, why couldn't I keep a few stray dogs at bay? Seriously, for most of the game, if I wasn't being someone's bitch, I was running scared from pissant critters. The overarching plot is fittingly epic and the graphics are fine, but plebeian puzzles and problem-fraught combat guarantee frustration in this humdrum quest.

**JOHN R:** Despite its numerous flaws and ridiculously short length, I somehow managed not to utterly despise the first *Legacy* game. This sequel is definitely better, yet it still suffers from many of the same fundamental problems. Most notably, the shoddy hit detection makes fighting enemies highly frustrating. On the good side, the graphics and sound are very solid, and the controls much better. As a DBZ RPG it suffices, but doesn't particularly impress.

CJ  
5.5

SHAWN  
5.0

JOHN R.  
6.0

Publisher: Atari  
Developer: Webfoot Technologies  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Everyone

www.gamers.com/134046

## REVIEWS WRAP-UP

Slipping through the cracks of gaming



In addition to the games our Crew judged this month, a few other titles will stealthily creep onto store shelves in the coming weeks. We had a chance to check them out, but due to space constraints, global marketing concerns, and the mysterious power of sunspots we weren't able to give 'em full reviews. Here's a quick look.

### Chessmaster

First off, we've always loved the Chessmaster himself—the wild-eyed, hobo whose face has graced every Chessmaster box since we were young. He's a stunning archetype for every filthy psycho you see playing street chess. Ubi Soft's PS2 game is definitely worthy of his mug—it offers bitchin' 3D-animated pieces, online play, and tutelege from a chess whiz. Plus, it's only 20 bucks.



### Shrek Super Party

When we asked CJ (who suffered through the Xbox version in *EGM* #163) to play the GameCube version of TDK's *Super Party*, he replied simply, "F\*\*\* you." Apparently, this turd is unpolishable, and he advises that even devoted Shrek fans avoid it at all costs and buy *Mario Party 4* instead.

### High Heat MLB Baseball 2004

Since the PS2 and Xbox versions of 3DO's *High Heat* ranked as our favorite hardball sims this year, we're pleased to announce that their tardy Cub cousin is just as great. You'll have to look past the slightly lame visuals, but the awesome gameplay and bottomless statistical depth make it the serious baseball fan's best bet.

### 61 Jockey 3

It seems that every month's Wrap-Up is



contractually obligated to feature at least one horse-racing sim. And Koté's *G1 Jockey 3* for PS2 is even a tiny bit better than last month's *Gallop Racer*, since G1 has over 4,000 unique horses! Seriously, check it out if you dig the horses.

Also, a few games we expected to review never made it to the party: *Enter the Matrix*, *The Hulk*, and *Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness* all failed to arrive in time for judgment. They'll all be out by the time you read this (well, except *Tomb Raider*). The *Hulk* and *Matrix* publishers claimed that review copies weren't available because they contained sensitive movie assets, so you'll be heading into the unknown if you lay down the cash.

Meanwhile, Lara Croft's true fate remains entirely shrouded in mystery,

■ (Left to right) The Chessmaster will take your queen and your wallet; don't RSVP for Shrek's Party; and G1 Jockey fulfills your wildest equine fantasies.

and we're starting an office pool to guess the real release date. Current longshot guess: October! ✎





# REVIEW ARCHIVE

A second look at notable releases from days gone by



**hack Part 2: Mutation** PS2 (Also On: None) 6.5, 6.5, 8.0

■ An average RPG with a neat concept—you play in a virtual online world gone berserk

**Apex** XB (Also On: None) 8.0 **Silver**

■ You don't just haul ass in this racer—you build your own autos and run a car factory

**Auto Modellista** PS2 (Also On: None) 5.0, 5.5, 7.0

■ Crappy handling ruins a gorgeous-looking online racer

**Batman: Dark Tomorrow** GC (Also On: XB) 2.0, 1.5, 1.0 **Shame**

■ Gaming's answer to the box-office hemorrhoid *Batman and Robin*

**BMX XXX** XB (Also On: PS2, GC) 2.5, 3.0, 3.5

■ Less about strippers than it is about making you play a stripped-down *Dave Mirra* clone

**Burnout 2: Point of Impact** PS2 (Also On: GC) 8.5, 8.0, 8.5 **Silver**

■ The sequel to this arcade racer fixes a lot of the issues we had with the original

**Capcom vs. SNK 2: EO** XB (Also On: PS2, GC) 7.5, 7.5, 9.0 **Silver**

■ Xbox Live is the real draw in this fighting fan's dream come true

**Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow** GBA (Also On: None) 9.5, 9.0, 9.5 **Gold**

■ With its excellent soul-stealing system, *Aria* outclasses its forerunners



**Conflict: Desert Storm** 5.5, 5.5, 6.5

GC (Also On: PS2, XB)

■ Co-op combat nearly saves the day

**Dark Cloud 2** 8.0, 8.0, 9.5 **Silver**

PS2 (Also On: None)

■ An addictive action-RPG with a sim twist

**Def Jam: Vendetta** 7.0, 8.5, 7.5

PS2 (Also On: GC)

■ Hip-hop stars and wrestling actually works. Word to your mother

**Devil May Cry 2** PS2 (Also On: None) 7.0, 7.0, 8.0

■ Dante and hottie-in-need Lucia blast through a cruddy plot in this too-easy sequel

## greatest hit or miss?



**PS2**

**STUNTMAN**

■ Publisher: Intergames  
 ■ Developer: Reflections  
 ■ Originally Released: June 2002

**Original Scores: 6.5, 4.5, 8.5**

Maybe more of a near-miss than a full-on dud, *Stuntman* failed to live up to most gamers' lofty expectations. Despite its pedigree with the mega-popular *Driver* series, developer Reflections didn't deliver—choppy visuals, sluggish control, and unforgiving difficulty leech most of the fun from this Hollywood stunt-driving sim.

**Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball**

XB (Also On: None) 7.5, 8.0, 6.0

■ Scientists are working to invent a nude code for this beach sports' bouncing she-ninjas

**Dragon Ball Z: Budokai** PS2 (Also On: None) 8.0, 7.5, 7.0

■ *Budokai* stands above any of the previous attempts to turn the series into a fighter

**Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 22** PS1 (Also On: None) 2.0, 1.5, 2.0

■ Someone crapped in a jewel case and passed it off as a *DBZ* game

**Dynasty Warriors 4** PS2 (Also On: None) 7.5, 7.0, 8.5

■ Obese warriors in obscure settings snacking on dim sum and severing heads

**EverQuest Online Adventures** PS2 (Also On: None) 7.5, 5.0, 6.0

■ Ugly visuals hampered our online quest for fun

**The Getaway** PS2 (Also On: None) 7.5, 6.0, 8.0

■ It looks like a *GTA* clone but plays like a Guy Ritchie flick, complete with naughty words

**Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee** GC (Also On: XB) 7.0, 7.0, 7.5

■ It's all fun and games till some monster gets hit in the eye with the Seattle Space Needle

**Grand Theft Auto: Vice City** PS2 (Also On: None) 10, 10, 10 **Platinum**

■ As if you don't already know why this game received our highest award

**High Heat Baseball 2004** PS2 (Also On: XB, GC) 9.0 **Gold**

■ The most realistic baseball sim on the market—period

**Hitman 2** PS2 (Also On: XB, GC) 9.0 **Gold**

■ With elements from *MGS* and *Max Payne*, *Hitman 2* is, quite simply, a hit

**The House of the Dead III** XB (Also On: None) 7.5, 7.0, 7.0

■ Nothing new will shock you in this formulaic zombie shooter, but it's still solid fun

**Ikaruga** GC (Also On: None) 8.5, 8.0, 8.0 **Silver**

■ One incredibly innovative, wickedly addictive shooter

**Indiana Jones & the Emperor's Tomb** XB (Also On: PS2) 5.5, 8.5, 8.5

■ Looks like Ms. Croft has some competition raiding tombs

**Legends of Wrestling II** GC (Also On: PS2, XB) 7.0, 6.0, 5.0

■ More like local-access television than *Wrestlemania*'s glamorous theatrics

**Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker** GC (Also On: None) 9.5, 10, 10 **Gold**

■ GC owners can't go wrong with *Zelda*'s gorgeous cartoon visuals and classic gameplay

**Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color** PS2 (Also On: None) 7.5, 8.0, 7.5

■ Homemade monsters add color to mundane battles

**Medal of Honor: Frontline** GC (Also On: PS2, XB) 7.0

■ The last great war makes for a great old time—especially with multiplayer

**MLB Slugfest 20-04** PS2 (Also On: XB, GC) 8.0, 7.0, 6.5

■ Tons of multiplayer fun, but don't expect the depth of a baseball sim

**Midnight Club II** PS2 (Also On: XB) 9.0, 8.0, 9.5 **Silver**

■ An unrelenting sense of speed and total disregard for realistic physics

**NBA Street Vol. 2** PS2 (Also On: XB, GC) 9.5, 8.5, 8.5 **Silver**

■ A mix of both new- and old-school flava makes this baller a rockin' sequel

**Panzer Dragoon Orta** XB (Also On: None) 9.0, 8.5, 9.0 **Silver**

■ Most beautiful on-rails shooter imaginable, with a vast trove of amazing secrets



## greatest hit or miss?

**PS2, Xbox**

# MAX PAYNE

■ Publisher: Rockstar  
 ■ Developer: Remedy  
 ■ Originally Released: Dec. 2005

**Original Scores: 8.8, 7.8, 8.5 (Xbox); 7.5 (PS2)**

If you can stomach its ultra-cheesy film noir story line, you'll find that *Max Payne* taps a plump action vein—the *Matrix*-style bullet-time effects, stylish graphics, and intense challenge kept gamers enthralled for the long haul. Pick this up before its dumbed-down-but-with-a-dog imitator, *Dead to Rights*.

**Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire** GBA (Also On: None) 7.5, 6.5, 7.5  
 ■ Pikachu and pals are back, but precious little has improved since *Gold/Silver*

**Primal** PS2 (Also On: None) 6.5, 6.5, 8.0

■ A beautiful, interesting adventure kinda compensates for crap combat

**Shinobi** PS2 (Also On: None) 7.5, 7.5, 7.0

■ Slick bosses and perfect control thrill, but the extreme difficulty cuts like a 3-foot Ginsu

**The Sims** PS2 (Also On: XB, GC) 9.5, 8.5, 8.0 **Silver**

■ Virtual soap-opera teens with innovation and freedom

**Skies of Arcadia Legends** GC (Also On: None) 9.0, 9.5, 9.0 **Gold**

■ This phenomenal skyfaring quest is the GC's role-playing savior

**Star Wars: The Clone Wars** XB (Also On: PS2, GC) 7.0, 7.0, 6.5

■ Online support puts this prettier version a few parsecs beyond its PS2 and Cube cousins

**Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus** XB (Also On: None) 4.0, 6.0, 3.5

■ Ineffective blocking and generic characters do not a quality fighter make

**Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven** PS2 (Also On: None) 7.5, 7.0, 7.0

■ Ninjas rock, but somehow a lackluster story and horribly stupid A.I. snuck in

**Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon** XB (Also On: PS2, GC) 8.0, 7.5, 8.0

■ Team-based online squad combat and Xbox Live's first nearly killer app

**Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell** GC (Also On: PS2, Xbox) 8.5, 9.5, 9.0 **Gold**

■ The GBA radar is a nice addition, but Sam Fisher isn't as pretty on the purple purse

**War of the Monsters** PS2 (Also On: None) 9.5, 6.5, 7.0

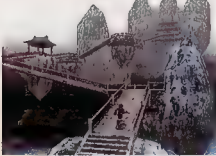
■ Manages to make the woefully underrepresented monster genre fun

**World Series Baseball 2K3** XB (Also On: PS2) 8.0, 8.0, 8.0 **Silver**

■ *WSB* stands out with countless customization options and first-rate player models

**World Soccer Winning Eleven 6 Int.** PS2 (Also On: None) 9.0 **Gold**

■ Can this natural-feeling soccer sim take 2003 Sports Game of the Year?



**Xenosaga: Episode 1**  
 PS2 (Also On: None)  
 8.0, 8.0, 6.5  
 ■ You don't so much play this RPG as watch its loopy plot unfold in hours of cut-scenes

**Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner**  
 PS2 (Also On: None)  
 7.5, 9.0, 8.5 **Silver**  
 ■ Eye-popping pandemonium with a hairy-balled hero—no winners this time

■ *Skies of Arcadia Legends*—the best GC RPG

# 10 GAMES YOU MUST FINISH THIS SUMMER

As you look over this list, you're heading your way, and it's all yours. You have the chance to catch up on the top-quality originals you've been meaning to finish.

- 1 Metal Gear Solid 2: Subsistence** 9.5, 9.5, 8.5 **Gold**  
 PS2 (Also On: XB)  
 You knew MGS creator Hideo Kojima had enormous bajajones when he decided to pull Solid Snake from the spotlight
- 2 Final Fantasy X** 9.0, 9.5, 9.5 **Gold**  
 PS2  
 Discover how Yuna survived the threat of Sin (and found love in the process) before she takes center stage in *FFX-2*
- 3 Silent Hill 2** 8.5, 7.5, 9.0 **Silver**  
 PS2 (Also On: XB)  
 SH2's snapshot of an unraveling mind is quite disturbing, and it also features some damn impressive fog
- 4 Pikmin** 8.0, 8.0, 8.5 **Silver**  
 GC  
 What could Nintendo mastermind Shigeru Miyamoto possibly be growin' in his garden that inspires a game like this?
- 5 Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers** 8.5, 8.0, 8.0 **Silver**  
 PS2 (Also On: XB, GC)  
 This precious movie-based beat-em-up goes beyond random button jackhammering
- 6 SOCOM: U.S. Navy Seals** 9.0, 9.5, 8.5 **Gold**  
 PS2  
 Barking orders at your numbskull partner Boomer is all right, but the real action's online
- 7 Ratchet & Clank** 8.0, 8.0, 9.0 **Silver**  
 PS2  
 Ratchet and his robot sidekick wield goofball weapons in this fun-action-platformer
- 8 Halo** 10, 10, 10 **Platinum**  
 XB  
 Sickly smart A.I., splendid scripting, and immaculate multiplayer set the standard for first-person shooting
- 9 Grand Turismo 3 A-Spec** 10, 10, 10 **Platinum**  
 PS2  
 Self-respecting speed freaks know this consummate racing sim leaves no belt untightened
- 10 Super Mario Advance 2** 9.0, 9.0, 9.0 **Gold**  
 GBA  
 Replay the platforming masterpiece that started your SNES cartridge collection





# tricks of the trade

strategies, codes, cheats, and other ways to ruin your games

## trickster



**Killing Nazis? Great! Killing robo-Nazis with embedded Gatling guns? Even better. Hence the success of *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*. Need some help playing *Wolf* on Xbox Live? I'm your new drill sergeant, maggots! Just don't freak out in the middle of the night and shoot me with rifle named Sharlene, mmkay?**

—David S. J. Hodgson  
tricks@ziffdavis.com

■ Xbox

## RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

Get online and get killing. But how? If you remember nothing else, remember this: Play as a member of the team, not as an individual. This means, for starters, don't kill your teammates. That's not fun for anyone. You might think you're having fun, but actually, you're being a jerk. Common mistake. The four character classes in the multiplayer game are designed to complement one another, and a winning team plays accordingly.

New to multiplayer? Here are some simple tricks that'll make you an asset to your team from the get-go: If you're on defense, arm yourself with the *Venom* and hide out in an objective room. Shamelessly camp near the documents or the radio that the opposing team needs. When any member of the other team shows up on your turf, promptly serve 'em a lead salad. If you're a ruckie on offense, try being a Medic. Follow your more knowledgeable teammates and provide support until you learn your way around the battlefield.

Once you have your bearings, it's time to specialize. Try each class to see what suits you. Whichever you choose, use your special abilities to help your team attain victory. Here's how.

## old-school fools

Our fabrication about de-fabricking the ladies of *DOA: Xtreme Beach Volleyball* earned us some extreme ill will. Man, some of our readers sure can hold a grudge. With death threats still coming in, we wondered how our latest tomfoolery, ahem, *stacks* up to *EGM* tricks of yesterday. Get it? *Stacks*? Never mind. Which was your favorite *EGM* April Fools' Trick?

**9%** The Misspelling of "Streets of Rage." Hilarious!

**21%** Vibrating "GameShertz" pants.

**21%** Belmont appears in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

**47%** I hate them and you equally.

**WINNER!**

Source: *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, April 2003

## TRICKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA GAMES

These strategies for *Wolfenstein*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, and *NBA Street Vol. 2* were hand-picked from a bounteous crop of seasonal strategy-guide fruit. For more succulent and nutritious hints, look for *Prima* flavor anywhere games are sold.



■ Yep. Just standing around, guarding the radio room, all alone. Talking to myself.

## Soldier

A specialist in all types of armament, the Soldier can choose any weapon. He should always be in the thick of the fray, covering a strategic location or defending a crucial objective. In addition to wielding weapons the other classes cannot use, the Soldier starts with the most ammunition (except for grenades). Because he constantly engages the enemy, however, his ammo supply and health need regular replenishing. Back him up with a Medic and a Lieutenant. The following strategies make the Soldier even more effective.

**Aim for the head.** One or two headshots are worth half a clip of body shots.

**Call for ammo and health.** Press Left on the D-pad for medical attention. Right to plead for ammo from the Lieutenant.

**Cover objectives.** Soldiers pack a lot more heat than other classes. Use it for important jobs, like guarding or assaulting team objectives.

**Swipe.** Use the Mauser to assist team members from a distance by picking off the enemy. Remember, aim for the head.

**Protect Engineers.** As a Soldier, it is your job to keep the Engineer alive while he tries to complete demolition objectives. If you're outnumbered while on escort duty, go ahead and bite off more than you can chew. Spread your fire around. Get the enemies' attention and earn your teammate valuable time. It's better for your team if you're executed by three enemies while your Engineer succeeds than if you take out two opponents while the third nixes your Engineer before his work is done. Take one for the team.

## Engineer

A specialist in explosives, the Engineer breaches fortified locations and destroys objectives. He can defuse the enemy's explosives before they go off, negating the resources and time they spent planting them. The Engineer can also repair broken stationary guns. And his many grenades are perfect for clearing out a room or



■ That's right. Dude, headshots are much more effective than firing at Jookie's body.





destroying a gun emplacement. By now, it should be clear that the Engineer is often the pivotal figure in a battle's outcome. The wise Engineer doesn't behave like a Soldier; he conserves his ammo for necessary self defense and concentrates on doing his job.

**Blow things up.** The Engineer sets explosives to open a path for his team or to destroy an objective. The red dots on your compass lead you to obstacles or objectives you can destroy. The larger the dots grow, the closer you are.

Planted dynamite, which glows yellow, needs to be armed before it can do its work. Use the pliers on planted dynamite until the blue progress bar is full. When the dynamite is armed, it glows red.

If you complete your demolition duty, switch to grenades and destroy camping enemies and enemy-held MG42s.

**Repair stationary guns.** Only an Engineer can repair a destroyed MG42. To fix the broken weapon, use the pliers as you would to arm dynamite. Be sure to tell your team that the gun is up and running again. They might not notice your handiwork in the heat of battle.

## guns. lots of guns

This chart shows each class' starting ammunition with all available weapons. (Note that the Colt and Thompson are Allied weapons. The Luger and MP40 are their respective Axis counterparts. Note further that Axis grenades have stupid-looking wooden handles. They still blow up real good, though.)

Weapon	SOLDIER	ENGINEER	MEDIC	LIUTENANT
Colt	32	32	32	32
Luger	32	32	32	32
Grenades	4	8	2	1
MP40	96	64	32	64
Thompson	90	60	30	60
Sten	96	-	-	64
Mausers	20	-	-	-
Shotgun	30	-	-	-
Panzerfaust	4	-	-	-
Venom	500	-	-	-
Flamethrower	200	-	-	-



Everything will be OK now that Dr. Feelgood is here. He'll make the pain go away.

### Medic

He heals the wounded and revives the fallen. When a Medic spawns, all his teammates gain an additional 10 Health Points. He carries little ammunition and has no choice in primary weapons.

Bear in mind the old adage, "Discretion is the better part of valor." Running from battle serves the Medic well, because he heals himself over time and has the highest health limit. The Medic can help his teammates attack the enemy, but he should not do so alone. Mainly, he should spend his time aiding wounded or incapacitated teammates. An adept Medic can make sure his team is always fighting, leaving little time for the opposing force to catch its breath.

**Heal the wounded.** Give medkits to teammates in need. Dispensing first aid kits depletes your power, which regenerates over time. When you're temporarily unable to drop first aid kits, simply wait until your power bar refills, then continue the healing! A full power bar yields four first aid kits.

When a teammate calls for a Medic, an icon appears over his head. If you are far away, follow the icon on your compass to locate him. The closer you are, the bigger the icon grows. When you find him, patch him up pronto. If no one else needs immediate attention, escort a Soldier or two and help them fight rather than wandering aimlessly or hanging back waiting to be called. Be proactive. Just because you're a healer doesn't mean you can't dispense a little pain.

**Revive the fallen.** Look for incapacitated men reaching for the sky and screaming for you. They need your attention. To revive a fallen man, pull out a syringe and give him a shot. You have only 10 syringes, so use them carefully, according to your team's needs.

### Lieutenant

The Lieutenant is like a scaled-back Soldier with some crucial special abilities. He can call in massive air strikes to destroy barriers or clear out a group of hostile soldiers. Less flashy but perhaps more important, the Lieutenant provides his teammates with extra ammunition. He can use his binoculars to gather intel about troop movements and warn his

squad of imminent danger.

He shouldn't charge in on the front lines like a Soldier, but neither should he be too far away from the action, where his ability to call in air strikes and distribute ammo are near-worthless. Try pairing the Lieutenant with a Medic so he can use his combat skills to inflict damage and never want for health.

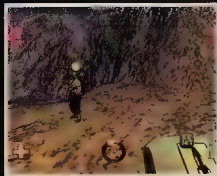
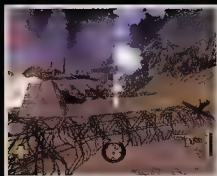
**Distribute ammunition.** Drop ammo packs at the feet of team members in need. If you run out, just wait a while to recoup your power. A full power bar yields four ammo packs.

When a teammate calls for ammo, an icon appears over his head. If you are far away, follow the icon on your compass to locate him. The closer you are, the bigger the icon grows. (Sound familiar?)

Don't get unnecessarily sidetracked by firefights; remember your role on the team. It's better to distribute ammo and have multiple effective combatants than for you to play Rambo while your team is trying to fight with pistols and knives.

**Bomb 'em.** Pick a spot ripe for an air strike and plant a smoke canister there. Shells will strike a large area surrounding the smoke. Bombs fall straight down toward your marker, so air strikes won't be effective under overhangs or arches. And obviously, you cannot use this ability indoors. You need 50 percent of your power bar to call for an air strike.

Try calling in a strike behind opposing snipers, who can't see past the view of their scopes and won't notice the signal smoke before the bombardment sends them to hell—uh, that is, to the reinforcements queue. This trick works on outdoor MG42 emplacements, too.







■ PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube

## NBA STREET VOL. 2

It's tempting to try for the biggest, phattest moves all the time, but a clever player will take advantage of your misplaced zeal and beat you to 21 faster than you can say "Kareem Abdul-Jabbar." These tips will steer you right. Listen up.

### Offense

To squeeze the last drop of talent from your boys, study the players' ratings and make sure you're putting them in the right situation. Don't try slamming over Shaquille O'Neal with Steve Nash, and don't bust out tricky dribbles with Yao Ming. Simple enough. When you've got the hang of these fundamentals and you're ready to elevate your game, try the following pimped-out strategies.

**Get to the basket.** When you're rushing the lane looking to make something happen, there's nothing worse than seeing seven feet of defender in your way (unless it's *not* seeing the seven feet of defender in your way). When it looks like your dunk will be skunked, make a mid-air transition to a layup. Start a dunk, and when the defender goes up for the block, tap Shoot again. Your player will dipse-do and gently loft the ball home for two.

**Handle the situation.** Take on the big men with your team's top handler. Trick into their bodies to knock 'em down. Big guys don't usually have a high Handles or Steals ratings, so they won't be picking your pocket. Once you leave them in the dirt, you'll have a clear path to the hoop and possibly an alley-oop opportunity.



**Use the pump fake.** Tap Shoot quickly to perform a pump. If they don't bite, pass. Even better, hit two Turbos and Pass to perform an Off da Heezay, bouncing the ball off your opponent's dome. Use a combination of pump fakes and passes to move the ball around and keep the defense off-balance.

**Work the whole court.** Draw the opposing team's best defender away from the hoop by swinging the ball to the weak



■ With your team's best handler, knock a defender on his ass by tricking into him.

side of the court. Setting picks is another good way to deal with lane congestion.

**Mix up your timing.** Try running past a defender and then doubling back with a trick. This can throw the defender off and earn you some easy Trick Points. If you're facing someone who's really good at Trick Counters, get used to interrupting your moves. Tap Pass during the animation to cancel your trick in order to stifle the steal.

**Don't get too fancy in the lane.** Even if you knock one defender down, there's probably another nearby ready to counter your scoring attempt.

**Control the ball.** When rebounding, you'll have an advantage if you box out. Wedge your player between an opponent and the hoop before you go up. This way, you have a better chance of sticking your missed shot. (Tap Shoot and hold Turbo for the tip-slam.) At the jump ball, don't mash buttons. Stay calm and tap Shoot once before the ball reaches its peak. Practice your timing.

### Defense

Even when you're trailing, don't lose heart. If there's any game in which a come-from-behind victory is possible, it's this one. Tightening up your D can make all the difference because it will lower your opponent's morale. Use these handy techniques to rein in a gloating winner and get back in the game.

**Own the goal.** In streetball, blocking every shot is fair and square—they don't call goaltending. Be sure you have a tall player near the rim at all times, as super blocking is a sure way to frustrate any opponent. To deny a shot with authority, hit Shoot/Rebound while holding Turbo and jumping into the ball's path. It sounds easy, but to block consistently, you'll have

to keep a watchful eye on your turbo meter and court position.

**Learn to lag.** As the offense approaches, don't be too eager to "man up," since it makes you vulnerable to knockdown tricks. Keep a fair distance from your man until you see an advanced trick move, then tap Turbo and Steal for a Trick Counter. The other benefit of keeping your distance is that if a shot goes up, you'll have time to fade back and attempt a block. If you're really tight on a man and he gets a shot off, you'll have to switch defenders and hope someone's close enough to try for the block.

**Don't fall for pump fakes.**

If an open player manages a three-point shot, you should have time to block it. Most shots will be dunks or short-range attempts that you can reject or alter. Failing for pump fakes adds to the other team's Gamebreaker meter. Don't be a chump.

**Watch the clock.** Pay attention to the shot clock. Look for rushed scoring attempts as time ebbs away. When five seconds remain, tighten the defensive screws. At three or less, be up on your man and ready to catch the shot right off his fingertips.

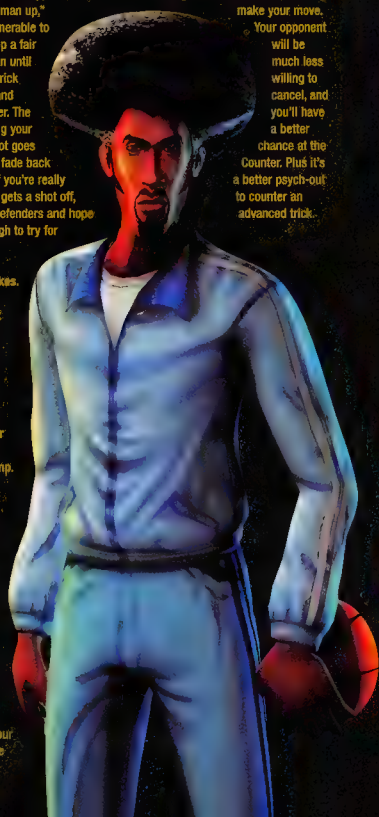
**Practice thievery.** If your opponent is fond of the

half-court pass and fast break, practice jumping in the path of the ball for the steal. Or steal his inbound passes: As your opponent is about to inbound, dart toward the receiving player. Tap Steal just as the opponent begins his ball-catching animation. Time it right and you'll wrest the rock from your opponent just when he's dreaming of a flashy dunk. Sweet.

**Always play tenacious D.** Don't give up on the play. It's difficult, but we've seen a baller come from behind the play and block the shot. Great recoveries are what it's all about. Challenge every shot. Simply having a player in your opponent's face as he shoots significantly reduces the shot's scoring chance. Try to have at least one player in your lineup with a top Blocks rating and another with a high Steals rating. This way, you'll put pressure on the offense anywhere on the court.

**Be tricky, not tricked.** Don't bust out Trick Counters willy-nilly. Wait and watch to make sure the offensive player has started doing an advanced trick, then

make your move. Your opponent will be much less willing to cancel, and you'll have a better chance at the Counter. Plus it's a better psych-out to counter an advanced trick.





■ Game Boy Advance

# YU-GI-OH! WORLDWIDE EDITION

Knowing the rules of the Duel hardly guarantees victory. The best Duelists have the game half won before they step onto the Field. They spend hours building their decks, carefully adding and subtracting cards according to a focused strategy. They're rather clever (and scary) individuals, and we're here to turn you into one of them by showing you the best cards in the game. But remember—don't include these "best" cards if they don't support your deck's strategy.

## Best Attack Monsters:

Card	ATK
Goblin Attack Force	2,300
Zombyra the Dark	2,100
Dark Elf	2,000
Panther Warrior	2,000
Gemini Elf	1,900
Slate Warrior	1,900
Vorse Raider	1,900
Mechanical Chaser	1,850
7 Colorad Fish	1,800
Battle Steer	1,800
Bistro Butcher	1,800
Dunames Dark Witch	1,800
Gearfried the Iron Knight	1,800
Giant Red Seasnake	1,800
Harpie's Brother	1,800
La Jinn the Mystical Genie	1,800
Copy Cat	0

## Best Defense Monsters:

Card	DEF
Aqua Madoor	2,000
Banisher of the Light	2,000
Giant Soldier of Stone	2,000
Humanoid Slime	2,000
Mystical Elf	2,000
Prevent Bat	2,000
Spirit of the Harp	2,000
The Forgiving Maiden	2,000
Copy Cat	0

## Semi-Limited Cards:

Backup Soldier
Graceful Charity
Morphing Jar #2
Nobleman of Crossout
Sangan

## Limited Cards:

Bell of Destruction
Call of The Haunted
Card Destruction
Ceasefire
Change of Heart
Confiscation
Cyber Jar
Dark Hole

## Delinquent Duo:

Exodia the Forbidden One
Harpie's Feather Duster
Heavy Storm
Imperial Order
Jinzo
Left Arm of the Forbidden One
Left Leg of the Forbidden One
Limiter Removal
Mage Power
Magic Cylinder
Mirror Force
Monster Reborn
Morphing Jar
Painful Choice
Pot of Greed
Premature Burial
Raijeki
Right Arm of the Forbidden One
Right Leg of the Forbidden One
Slate Warrior
Snatch Steal
Swords of Revealing Light
The Forceful Sentry
United We Stand
Upstart Goblin
Witch of the Black Forest

## Best Fusion Monsters:

Beastking of the Swamps
Cyber-Stein
Fusion Sage
Goddess with the Third Eye
Monster Eye
Mystical Sheep #1
Magician of Faith
Polymerization

## Best Magic and Trap Cards:

Monster Destruction
Card Destruction
Damage Prevention
Magic and Trap Prevention

## Best ATK for Level 5-6 Monsters:

Amphibian Beast
Cyber-Tech Alligator
Jinzo
Summoned Skull

## Best DEF for Level 5-6 Monsters:

Beast of Giffir
Boulder Tortoise
Illusionist Faceless Mage
Labyrinth Wall
Millennium Golem
Millennium Shield
Total Defense Shogun

## Best ATK for Level 7+ Monsters:

Blue-Eyes White Dragon
Cosmo Queen
Tri-Horned Dragon
Sengenjin
Wingweaver

## Best Fusion Monsters:

Blue-Eyes Ultimate Dragon
Gate Guardian
Meteor B. Dragon
B. Skull Dragon
St. Joan



## Best 7+ Star Monsters for Defense:

Valkyrior the Magna Warrior
Hyozenryu

## Cards Allowing Special Summoning:

Elegant Egotist
Giant Rat
Sangan
Witch of the Black Forest

## Cards that Prevent Monster Attacks:

Nightmare's Steelcage
Swords of Revealing Light

## Cards that Negate Damage:

Kuriboh
Magic Cylinder
Tornado Wall
Wakobu

## Traps that Stop Monsters:

Gravity Bind
Shadow Spell
Spellbinding Circle

## Cards that Neutralize or Destroy Individual Monsters:

Acid Trap Hole
Bell of Destruction
Crush Card
Hane-Hane
Man-Eater Bug
Michizure
Nobleman of Crossout
Penguin Soldier
Solemn Judgement
Trap Hole
Tribute to The Doomed

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Brian Germain



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# THE REST OF THE CRAP

Seanbaby suffers so you won't have to

## sound off



### MY JOB SUCKS

There are times during everyone's career when they think they might have chosen the wrong line of work. For example, when a fugitive wearing a wet suit and night-vision goggles is hiding in the bottom of an outhouse, some poor police officer has to drag him out of there and arrest him. One day that cop and his talking dog were kung-fu-ing cocaine smugglers, and the next day fate spits on his head from its kick-ass flying fate motorcycle. But know this: Every time a cop handcuffs a man covered in redneck excrement, he radios in, "Dispatch, this is toilet patrol. At least I didn't have to review a game about Piglet. Over!"

—Seanbaby

### PlayStation 2 PIGLET'S BIG MOVIE GAME



Publisher: Gotham Games  
ESRB: Everyone

This is a tough game to judge—it's clearly made for people too young to distinguish between it and food. It's so infantile that players will receive a nomination from the Academy for their brave portrayals of related characters. At one point, my pathetic pig had to rescue Pooh from a pile of sticky caramel he sat on. To give you an idea of the intellectual journey this sent Piglet's brain on, Pooh suggested I use a

stick. Four inches away, the only item on the screen just happened to be a giant glowing stick. But I was not about to let a piglet I'm controlling take advice from someone who lost a life-and-death battle of wits to an ice-cream topping.

Drawing upon my vast knowledge of adventure-game logic puzzles, I knew Pooh's best chance was for Piglet to infect him with exotic ass warts that secrete caramel solvent. I'm embarrassed to admit I couldn't locate the combination of items to trigger that reaction, but I'm more embarrassed to admit that I let out an audible "Hooryay" after I discovered that when you kick the giant cupcakes, they launch cookies!

**Bottom Line:** Even mentally impaired players may find this game lacking in complexity and challenge.



### PlayStation THE THREE STOOGES

Publisher: Metro 3D  
ESRB: Everyone

This is an exact port of a Game Boy Advance game ported from an old NES game ported from a Commodore 64 game based on a TV show that went off the air before half of the current world's population was born. It would have saved everyone some time if this game came packaged with a garbage can already built around it. Your goal is to prevent the foreclosure of Ma's Orphanage by forcing the Stooges into random jobs, none of which manages to generate more fun than filling out a real-life job application.

There are a few positions where you get to exploit the Stooges' penchant for slapstick violence, like when they, for reasons we can't possibly understand, are hired by a restaurant to throw pies at customers. The game quickly takes a turn for the tragic, though, when they're hired as orderlies. At that job, you knock dying people off their stretchers during a high-speed dash through a hospital. I lack the philosophical background to judge whether one orphanage is worth the cost of hundreds of sick people toppling to their deaths in a hallway, but I do know that if the only people interested in saving an orphanage are three lunatics slapping

each other in the face, they probably should be raising children.

**Bottom Line:** Playing this game could conceivably show your ability to enjoy any form of entertainment.

### PlayStation BRATZ



Publisher: Ubi Soft  
ESRB: Everyone

Videogames can make our wildest dreams come to fruition. And I guess enough people have listed "tapping my thumb against things" as a personal dream in market-research polls, 'cause someone releases a horrible rhythmic-dancing game every seven hours.

You'll find that Bratz has worse music than most, but there's good news: The game's sassy voice is so busy congratulating or mocking your ability to tap the controller correctly, you usually can't hear the music. In a matter of seconds, it builds you up from "Cool!" to "Amazing!" to "Your thumb transcends my wildest erotic tapping fantasies!" and then after one miss, it hits you with, "Oh, I don't think so!" Tease. Plus, check out the stylized Bratz "girls" below—sexualizing young girls has never been this scary.

**Bottom Line:** No, really, this is the worst button-tapping simulation yet. This time I mean it. I swear.



### classic trap

#### ALF

In a fantastic clash of phenomenal gameplay failures, the 8-bit Sega Master System game *Alf* managed to disappoint even *Alf* fans. Which, according to modern science, should have been impossible.



### Game Boy Advance THE MUPPETS: ON WITH THE SHOW!

Publisher: TDK Mediactive  
ESRB: Everyone

*The Muppet Show* delivered comedy skits, musical numbers, and Hollywood's hottest guest stars with the promise that at least once every episode, Gonzo would hint that he was about to have sex with a chicken. And though singing puppets managed to make alien-on-chicken bestiality palatable enough for children's programming, nothing could save this videogame.

Putting *The Muppets: On With the Show!* into your GBA is like taking yourself prisoner in your own portable torture camp. And like all good forms of torture, it doesn't confine itself to just one type of indescribable pain. There are several different minigames, most of which require you to dodge slowly moving objects for 30 or 40 seconds. This is only challenging because the felt monstrosities you control take little or no interest in the directional commands you input. Still, if you manage to get to the store, buy this game, and get back to your car without ramming into any more than 13 or 14 walls, playing *On With the Show!* will probably be an insult to your motor skills.

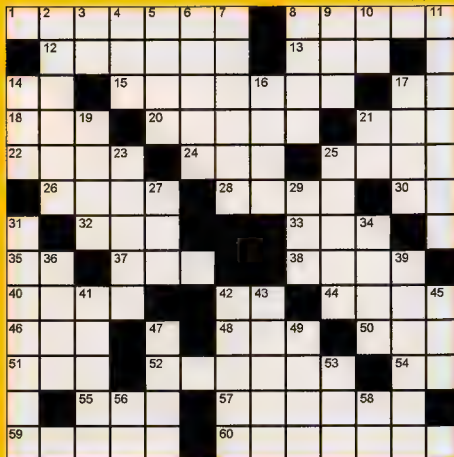
**Bottom Line:** I'd rather watch the two old Muppet dudes in the balcony make out than play this. 🐻





# CROSSWORD: CASTLEVANIA

(Solution on page 132)



## ACROSS

1. *Castlevania* bloodline
8. Tony Hawk rail slide
12. One who is scared of *Castlevania's* (NES) fifth boss?
13. Three strikes in *All-Star Baseball*
14. Game-to-TV freq. modulator
15. Like NES's *Bignose*
17. Home to the E3 convention
18. You have to change it in *Gran Turismo*
20. Increases with your experience in *Phantasy Star Online*
21. Namco's main \_-Man
22. Obnoxious *Castlevania* foe
24. You find one behind the observatory's star chart in *Shadowgate* (NES)
25. Extremely well-versed gamer?
26. *Goonies II* sidearm
28. What the sun will do to break a curse in *Simon's Quest*
30. *World Series Baseball* league, for short
32. *Tiger Woods* Golf association
33. Used to play *Dance Dance Revolution*
35. From Software PS2 title, for short
37. Sony's new (and Working Designs' former) RPG star
38. Like arcade's *51*
40. May lock behind you in a horror game
42. Xbox team-based shooter, for short
44. A record of game data
46. Proof of game purchase
48. Use the gun sight in a first-person shooter
50. When foes are weaker in *Simon's Quest*
51. Jet \_ *Radio Future*
52. Like Banballo's skin in *Unleashed* (DC)
54. Madden offensive position, for short
55. Mini white PlayStation, PS\_
57. Hsu & Chan surname
59. Like *Daxter*, or the title of a now-defunct girl's magazine
60. Dracula's son

## DOWN

2. One of three keys to the Enchanted Gladius in *Eternal Darkness*
3. *Test Drive* \_ *Mans*
4. Little *Punch-Out!!* (NES) protagonist
5. Xbox Live chat method
6. When *Tetris* ends?
7. Fought Dracula in *Castlevania III*
8. Early Jaleco soccer game for NES
9. Double-tap the D-pad to do it in *Symphony of the Night*
10. Came from the Desert in a TurboGrafx-16 CD game
11. Alucard's father
14. King, to a French *Tekken* player
16. Kit that heals in *Half-Life*
17. Ms. Croft
19. Videogame music pattern
21. GBA's \_-jo Pop
23. Wields Diskarmor
25. Climb these in *Castlevania* clock towers
27. Magic item in *Zelda: Oracle of Ages*
29. Place to replenish health in *River City Ransom* (NES)
31. Arguably the most annoying *Castlevania* baddies
34. Evil \_ or Red \_ *Revolver*
36. Used to climb in *Tenchu*
39. *Ultima's* main dude
41. *Zelda's* "roks" and Atari's "pus"
42. *Phantasy Star* ice spell
43. *Lap Twin* or *Doom*
45. Magall's weak point in *Zelda: WW*
47. What allies do to your commands in *Kessen*
49. The Start button usually brings one up midgame
53. Converts video and audio signals in CD-based consoles (abbrv.)
56. Atari game featuring robotic Stalkers, for short
58. *Mr. Mosquito's* Japanese alias

# MATRIX CONTEST:

## ROUND TWO

Enter the Matrix...and win lots of cool stuff!



PlayStation 2



Are you The One? In celebration of the *Matrix* movies and game, *Computer Gaming World* and *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, in coordination with our sponsors—Nintendo of America, Sony Computer Entertainment America, Infogrames, and Warner Home Video—challenge you to follow the white rabbit through our magazines this month and uncover the truth! Just find all five (5) rabbits hidden on the pages of each magazine and submit your answers at <http://gamers.com/feature/matrix/>. All correct entries will be entered in a random drawing for a chance to win one of the following great prizes:

### Grand Prizes (We're giving away five (5) of each!)

Sony PlayStation 2  
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Microsoft Xbox

### First Prizes (10 for each platform!)

Infogrames' *Enter The Matrix* game for PC, PlayStation 2, GameCube, and Xbox

### Second Prizes

30 *Animatrix* DVDs  
20 *The Matrix Special Edition* DVDs  
10 *The Matrix* DVDs (regular version)

### Runners-Up Prizes

20 one-year subscriptions to *Computer Gaming World*  
20 one-year subscriptions to *Electronic Gaming Monthly*

### HOW TO PLAY

CGW and EGM will each have five (5) white rabbits hidden on five (5) different pages of our July issues. To enter, you need to:

1. Find the five (5) pages with white rabbits in *EGM*
2. Find the five (5) pages with white rabbits in *CGW*
3. Log on to the contest page at <http://gamers.com/feature/matrix/>
4. Enter the five (5) white-rabbit page numbers for *CGW* in sequential order from lowest to highest
5. Enter the five (5) white-rabbit page numbers for *EGM* in sequential order from lowest to highest

All correct entries received by July 1, 2003, will then be entered into a drawing for the prizes! Only one entry per person is accepted.

And, oh yeah, the rabbit on this page that you're looking at right now? It counts! It's a freebie. (But don't count any you see on the cover or polybag.) Now go find the four (4) others...and good luck!

Full legal rules available at <http://gamers.com/feature/matrix/>





**NEXT MONTH: AUGUST 2003 • ISSUE #169**

ON SALE JULY 1



## FEATURES

We're off to gaming's Graceland, the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). We'll eavesdrop on the big three console makers' war rooms, survey their secret weapons, and pop the lid on who's plotting what behind closed doors. What we find is guaranteed to keep your eyes glazed for the year to come. We've also got exclusive screens and the scoop on a certain hedgehog's upcoming spring to all three consoles. Seems Sonic is dashing into new territory—you control three characters at a time to tackle obstacles as a team. Trust us, you've never seen Sega's prickly mascot like this before.

## REVIEWS

- Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic (Xbox)
- Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness (PS2)
- Brute Force (Xbox)
- Mario Golf (GC)
- Enter the Matrix (PS2, Xbox, GC)



## PREVIEWS

- Halo 2 (Xbox)
- Gran Turismo 4 (PS2)
- Mario Kart: Double Dash (GC)
- Resident Evil Online (PS2)
- Ninja Gaiden (Xbox)



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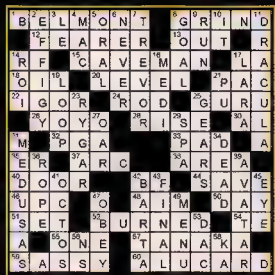
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**ANSWERS TO CASTLEVANIA  
CROSSWORD** *on page 131*

on page 131

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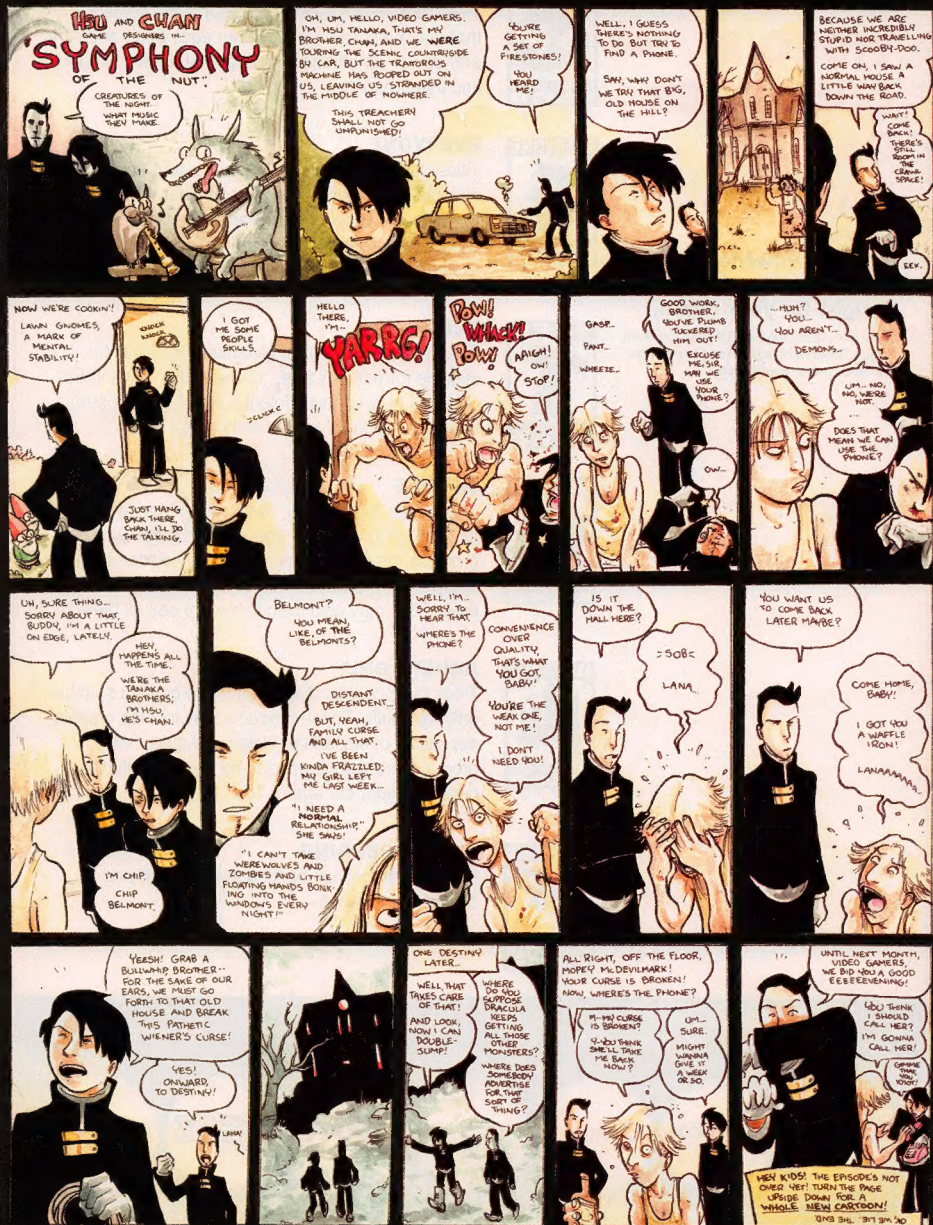
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